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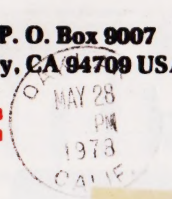

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VOL. 8 NO. 7
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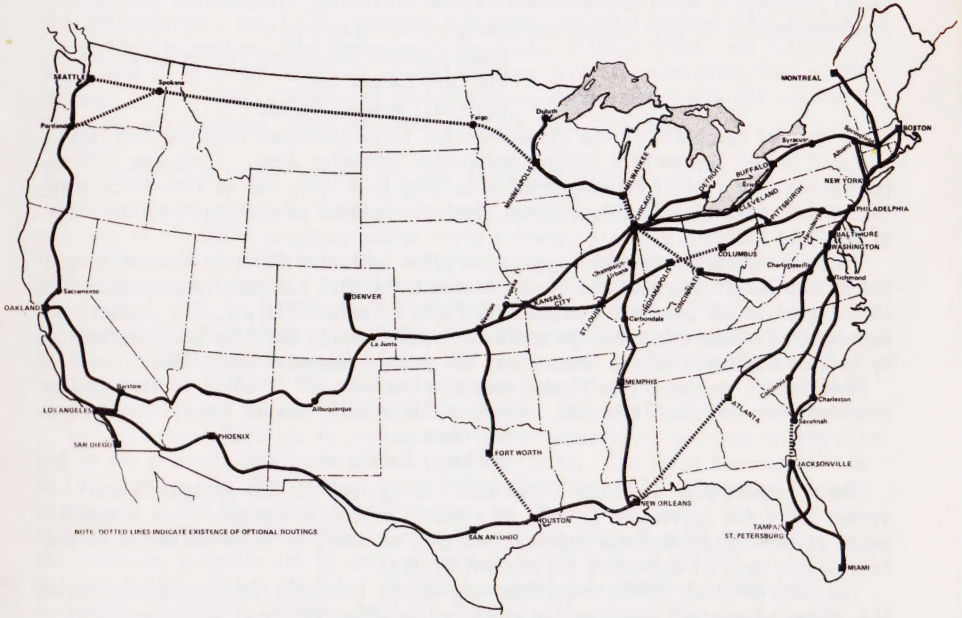
THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDED ROUTE STRUCTURE



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Brock Adams

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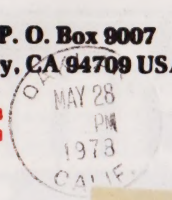

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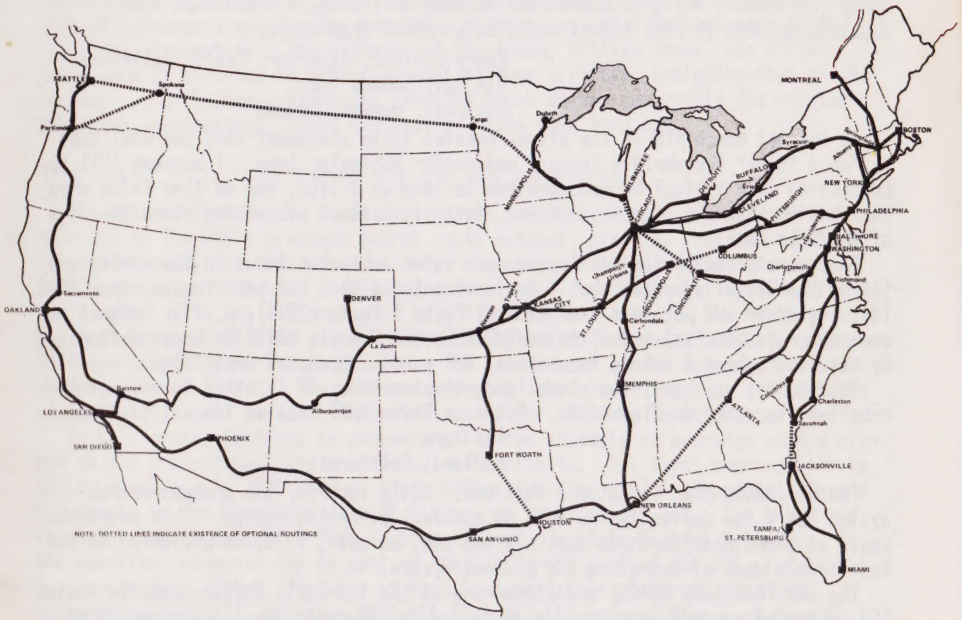

Sincerely,

Brock Adams

THE COVER STORY

This is the Amtrak route map proposed in the Department of Transportation's preliminary plan released on May 8. In this issue we deviate somewhat from our usual format to present a special report on this plan, summarizing as much of the important parts of it as possible. The report on the DOT report begins on page 10.

LETTERS

The article "VIA Rail Canada: A Dissenting View" (RTN, 1st March) contains a number of errors that could be refuted but this would require more space than was given to the original article. May I suggest that an article giving the positive aspect of the role that VIA Rail Canada will play could be of interest to your readers. Everything that VIA Rail Canada has done since its creation has had only one aim: improve and revitalize Canada's rail passenger services. While we expect and welcome criticism, I would hope that a magazine devoted to rail travel would help rather than knock.

Emery LeBlanc, Director, Public Relations
VIA Rail Canada Inc.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

In the 1st March RTN is the often-repeated false statement that the BART tube is "said to be" the world's longest underwater vehicular tube. I suppose I'll be correcting this typical PR exaggeration as long as I live, for we live in an area that has to have the biggest, longest, fastest, best of everything since the days of the Gold Rush.

There are probably several longer underwater vehicular tubes in the world, going by the law of averages, but I can document one that has been in use since 1886. It's listed in the Guinness Book of Rail Facts & Feats (1971), p. 111: Longest underwater (vehicular) tunnel in world is Severn Tunnel, built by Great Western Ry between England & Wales; four miles, 628 yards. Opened 1 Sept. 1886.

This tunnel was built for steam locomotive service; it is still in use, giving excellent service; doubletracked. Guinness lists BART tube as longest in America.

Ted Wurm
Oakland, California

The DOT/Adams plan is not all that bad. Let's face it; the present Amtrak system has a few duplicated as well as non-cost effective routes. This proposal would at least resolve these duplications and, as such, is to be preferred to the intolerable cost of operating the present system.

The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and either one of the two daily Chicago-Seattle routes (Ed. note: at present these two services run on alternate days) are examples of the presently duplicated services that this plan would eliminate. The DOT/Adams plan would, however, provide the West with three well-serviced and daily routes from the East. In addition, it would provide here in California for the populous San Joaquin Valley to be an integral part of the Amtrak system rather than the present ludicrous side show... Let's not blow this opportunity to rationalize the Amtrak system--after all, at least the HILLTOPPER is going!

Joseph P. Lyons
Fresno, California

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Texas apologizes for the recent wayward antics of Senator Lloyd Bentsen who earlier purported to be an advocate of Amtrak but who has now dumped support of the issue. I have written to him and confronted him with the ICC, MacDonald, and "Inter-American" Oversight Committee Reports, the Harris Poll and the past record of Amtrak's exploits in Texas, and he has completely avoided the sidestepped the refutations I have presented. It is recommended that all rail passenger advocates write to Senator Bentsen and express their displeasure with his abdication from the issue.

M. D. Monaghan, Director NARP Region IX
Garland, Texas

PALMETTO DERAILS IN COLLISION

The northbound PALMETTO, Amtrak train 90, collided with a flatbed truck loaded with telephone poles and derailed, the entire train falling off the tracks onto its right side. The accident occurred on May 10 40 miles north of Charleston, near Lane SC, where State Road 377 crosses the SCL tracks. The crossing is protected by only a stop sign. The train, traveling at 50-60mph in an 80mph zone, with 23 passengers and 7 crew, carried a baggage car and 3 Amfleet cars behind its single locomotive. The engineer of the train, William Brown, was killed. There were 21 injuries reported, several of them critical, including that of the fireman, J. C. Fisher. Witnesses said the truck driver apparently did not see the train approaching. About 470 feet of track were torn up.

ICC WILL RUSH DOT PLAN HEARINGS

The Interstate Commerce Commission, given until Aug 31 to complete public hearings on the DOT's proposed Amtrak route cutback, plans to rush the hearings to completion by the third week of July, beginning the hearings in late June, an ICC spokesman indicated in mid-May. About 40-50 hearings will be held around the country, with the ICC hoping to hold 3 hearings at a time. The hearings will not include the FLORIDIAN and SOUTHERN CRESCENT trains, because separate hearings on these have already been scheduled. The exact dates of the hearings will be announced about June 1. The proposed hurry-up schedule of hearings will make it maximally difficult for rail supporters and other citizens to attend.

In California, Caltrans is announcing its own schedule of hearings on the plan and on the present Caltrans program of rail projects. The first hearing will be in Los Angeles July 15 9:30am at State Office Building, 107 S. Broadway. Second hearing is in San Francisco July 22 9:30am, no location set yet. The third one is in Sacramento July 28 9:30am in room 4202 of the State Capitol Building. In the meantime, comments can be sent on the California part of the DOT plan to: Mr. George Gray, Chief, Division of Mass Transportation, Caltrans, Box 1499, Sacramento CA 95807. Caltrans told RTN that it will endorse Plan E of the DOT (see pp. 12-13) which is more elaborate than the plan recommended by Adams.

AMTRAK OFFERS FAMILY RAIL PASS

Amtrak announced May 10 that it is offering a new Family USA Rail Pass beginning May 16. The head of a household will pay the full pass price, and the spouse and children 12 and over will pay half the usual price. Children between 2 and 11 will pay only $50 each regardless of the length of the pass. Prices (good between May 16 & Sep 5) for the head of the household are $250 for 14 days, $315 for 21 days, and $385 for 30 days. These prices are 14% lower than last summer's. Amtrak said the pass is "aimed at capturing an increased portion of the family auto vacation market." A family of 4 (with 2 children under 12) could make a transcontinental roundtrip of 6900 Amtrak miles for less than 7¢ a mile for the whole family--compared with 17¢ a mile by automobile.

FRIMBO TRAVELS TWO-AND-A-HALF MILLION

by James Russell

The unmistakable figure of Rogers Whitaker stood outside the vestibule entrance of sleeper "Silver Falls" on the COAST STARLIGHT at Oakland as I dashed up, Amtrak bag in hand, five minutes before departure time. "Have you had breakfast?" he asked, and we turned left into the dining car. It all happened so quickly. I found myself across the breakfast table from "Rogers E. M. Whitaker, railfan extraordinaire, historian and leading rider and exponent of railroad passenger trains" who as the Amtrak invitation had announced was reaching a milestone in his career this Friday, May 12 as he passed his 2,500,000th mile of rail travel.

I hadn't expected to see him until San Jose, where Amtrak's Art Lloyd and others would join the train, but he had to alter his itinerary and board at Oakland in order to reach the proper mileage exactly at milepost 243 on the scenic horseshoe curve north of San Luis Obispo. He even rode some SP commute trains the evening before to bring his rail mileage up. The change of itinerary was caused by a freight derailment somewhere west of Chicago that blocked the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and caused him to fly for one leg of his journey.

We were in San Jose on time, and Art Lloyd boarded. Our train had the now-regular consist of two domes. We had SDP40F engines 532 and 635, and cars 1220, 1503, 4530, 4856, 4461, dome coach 9461, 4509, ex-SUPER CHIEF dome lounge 9350, diner 8033, and sleepers 2654 "Silver Falls" and 2607 "Pacific Cove". Mr. Whitaker was heading for Los Angeles and a NARP meeting. I would leave at San Luis Obispo and return on the northbound train.

We were doing some street running, and Mr. Whitaker remarked "When I become Dictator of the United States I shall require all passenger trains to run down the main street of cities, and there will be a station in the center of the city with a hotel connected with it--we'll get back to some basic order." When he was a child his father carefully tallied all his rail travel miles, and he continued to do so when he was old enough to read a timetable, and thus he has an exact count of the miles of rail that have slid by beneath his trains.

We retired to the dome lounge. Here we found the one flaw to be encountered on this trip--the temperature in the dome was about 90°. Art Lloyd fiddled with the controls and the heat began slowly subsiding. These ex-SUPER CHIEF domes, with the noted Turquoise Rooms below, are my favorite cars now running, and the presence of this car added to one of the most perfect rail trips I have had. The California scenery was magnificent today. The ample rainfall this year, following two years of drought, had brought out thick green grass everywhere and broad fields of wildflowers that were in full bloom. Mr. Whitaker remarked several times on the beauty of the scene--the best he had ever seen on this route. There were huge expanses of bright yellow mustard, big patches of blue lupine (from the vestibule door you could even smell its fragrance, over the odors of diesel smoke and brake shoe dust) and large magenta spots of owl's clover. The day was bright and sunny, after several days of fog. Everything was prepared for this special trip.

Mr. Whitaker told how the pen name "E. M. Frimbo" originated. It was the name of an African witch doctor in a play he and other members of the New Yorker staff attended. Some of his colleagues remarked that Frimbo in the play reminded them of him, and soon the name was adopted, with the addition of his middle initials.

At exactly 12:30 we entered the diner for a special lunch ordered by Art Lloyd. We all chose the Soup and Sandwich, the sandwich being a triple decker clubhouse with turkey, bacon and tomato. The soup was fish chowder, a very delicious variety. Our table was at the very front end of the car and was set with linens (paper place mats are regularly used at lunch). Art Lloyd talked about the din-

(Below:) Not even the latest issue of Rail Travel News can tear Rogers Whitaker's attention away from the magnificent California scenery viewed from dome lounge 9350. Large swivel seats have been re-upholstered in blue-with-yellow material.

(Above:) Mr. Whitaker bows to an appreciative audience in the STARLIGHT's dining car as Amtrak's Art Lloyd introduces him as railfan extraordinaire and senior editor of the New Yorker magazine.

ing car: "These cars were built in 1937--they're the oldest we have. But they're among our best diners." The ex-Santa Fe car rode well and was very pleasant. Even nicer was a sister car on my return trip; it had an artificial ceiling with modernized lighting added.

We passed Santa Margarita and were already in the tunnels north of the horseshoe curve. Art Lloyd chatted on with members of our party across the aisle. Mr. Whitaker was looking a bit anxious that milepost 243 would pass unnoticed, but Art is a seasoned tour leader who acts nonchalant while having every detail under control. A waiter removed our plates and set iced champagne glasses on our table. He presented a bottle of Almaden champagne wrapped in Amtrak linens, and filled our glasses. We were precisely at the appointed milepost on the sweeping curve above San Luis, and we drank a toast to Frimbo and the splendid rail traveling he has inspired in so many of us.

At that moment, Art Lloyd rose and addressed the crowd in the diner, telling them of the special occasion and inviting them to join in with complimentary champagne and cake. Mr. Whitaker rose and bowed, to the applause of his surprised audience.

We were now slowing for San Luis, and I reluctantly left the celebration. I even missed the cake, which was a white cake with a strawberry jam layer.

The return trip was equally fine operationally and scenically. The train was 20 minutes late into San Luis but a few minutes early at Oakland. The pleasant

atmosphere of the whole day renewed my faith in the STARLIGHT, a train we have often been critical of, especially in on-board services. I hope every STARLIGHT rider this year enjoys this interesting train as much as I did that Friday.

Rogers Whitaker reaches his 2,500,000th mile of rail travel in the diner of the southbound COAST STARLIGHT on May 12. Photos by the author.

CARS & CONSISTS

*NORTH STAR, train 9, Chicago May 4: engine 233 (F40PHR); cars 1249 (mail to Duluth), 2915 "Pacific Hills", Amfleet cars 20225, 21846, 21156, 21238.

*PIONEER, train 26, Seattle May 8: engine 215 (F40); cars 21865, 21859, Amdinette 20221, 2995 "Pine Brook", baggage 1261.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 18, St. Paul/Minneapolis May 10: engines 242, 241 (F40PHR's); heater car 665; cars SP6750, 1570, 4520, dome 9479, 4547, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 8046, 2658 "Silver Dale", 2661 "Silver Plain".

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 30, May 16, Kansas City: engines 418, 408 (E's); cars 1198, 1046, 2154 "Silver Orchid", diner-observation 8302, 3800, 5435, 5412, (deadheads:) dome 9365 "River View", 8084 "Moultrie".

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Richmond VA May 11: engines 645, 608; cars 1086, 1428, 2536 "Thrush", 3213 "Nutmeg State", 4465, 4416, 4414, 8009, 3335, 4565, 4573, 5414, 2537 "Wren".

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, train 1, Edmonton May 18: engines 6506, 6605, 6607; cars 9648, 5560, 5500, 752, 5714, 5707, "Edenwold", "Eureka", dome "Jasper", 1370, "Riverview", "Emperor", "Erickson", "Saskatchewan River", bus. cars 15110, 93.

REACTIONS TO THE DOT PLAN FOR AMTRAK

Reactions in the national press to the DOT's preliminary plan to cut 8100 miles from the Amtrak system have been mixed about 50/50. On a more local level, citizens and legislators have shown distress and fury in their public statements. Nebraska mayors, Iowa lobbyists, the Kansas City Times, the Nebraska Congressional delegation, San Francisco papers, Nevada Senator Cannon, both Colorado Senators, Wyoming Senator Hansen, Wyoming's Congressional delegation, the Rocky Mountain News, the Cleveland Press, Daytona Beach Evening News, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the St. Petersburg Times are some of the sources of statements we have seen rejecting the DOT/Adams slashes.

One retort that rail supporters are calling "dynamite" came a few days ago from Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco. In a letter to DOT Secretary Adams she pointed out that the yearly subsidy for the entire Amtrak system would barely build 3 miles of freeway at today's costs. She also noted that if the costs of air travel were fully allocated and passed on to the passenger (as Adams would like to do with Amtrak in forcing it to raise fares) a one-way airline ticket from California to New York would cost $1,000.

Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen and the two Dallas newspapers both went on record as favoring the Amtrak cuts (this is alluded to in Dr. Monaghan's letter on p. 3). The Chicago Sun-Times said it was "Time to trim Amtrak".

Readers are asking for RTN's view of this matter, and we give it below.

RTN'S VIEW OF THE DOT PLAN

RTN takes the following editorial stance regarding the proposed Amtrak cuts:

(1) No present route should be cut from the Amtrak system.

(2) Several routes deserve to be added soon to the system.

(3) Some re-routings and realignments of services would be desirable.

(4) Increased train frequencies on a number of routes are highly desirable.

(5) Arrangements should be made for Amtrak to carry more mail and express to increase revenues.

(6) Additional non-Amtrak funding for trains should be found, for example in the National Park Service assisting in subsidizing trains that serve parks.

(7) Any additional budget cuts should be made at the management level within Amtrak, where the corporation is overweighted with personnel.

(8) The DOT should adopt an explicit policy of limiting the number of motor vehicles on the roads (currently 10,000 are added daily) and encouraging public transportation by the many economic incentives it has at its disposal.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Altho I am not a member of any anti-highway organization, I now understand how they can prosper and why they picket the (DOT) building. It's because people like me write reasonable letters and get no response. That is insensitive. Guess who is looking for an anti-highway group to join."

--Reader Joseph Vranich quoted in the Washington Star, May 20

FAMOUS LAST WORDS***

"A Stanford Research Institute economist says the number of train passengers between San Francisco and Portland will continue to decline until there aren't enough left to support any passenger service... He said competition from autos, buses and planes has cut into the number of train passengers for the past 18 years, and the trend cannot be reversed."

--From UPI wire report of the late 1960's

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

EDMONTON'S TRANSIT SYSTEM OPENS

Quiet is the word for the new Edmonton transit system, but it certainly cannot be applied to the madhouse opening of April 23. That day the system carried about double its rated load, besides contending with the vagaries of a brand new system--one of which was a switch failure at Belvedere which almost stopped the system for two hours. By 5pm the system was running fairly well again but a car had to be taken out of service, causing a long delay. Since opening day the system has been running with few problems and now seems to be an accepted part of life for thousands of Edmontonians living in the northeast and even the northwest sectors of the city. Non-rush hour passenger counts have been much heavier than forecast, proving that a spacious, quiet and predictable transportation system can actually generate off-hour traffic, an action which should go a long way toward reducing the deficit of public transit in Edmonton.

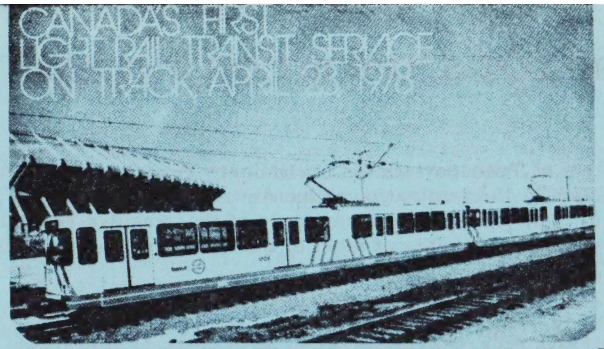
Most of the thousands of Edmontonians who have been able to take a transit trip have been amazed by the silence of the cars, as heard from within the trains or at trackside or platform. They have also been impressed with how smoothly the cars ride, and their rapid, positive acceleration. Those who have been on trips where the malfunctioning trackside speed monitoring system has acted up or a red signal has been passed have also been duly impressed by the very positive stopping power of the braking system! The fully applied brakes bring a 2-car train to a stop in one train length, altho with a certain degree of discomfort to standing passengers.

The visual impact of the 2-car trainsets, painted in their smart white, blue and yellow scheme which agrees with the trains far more than the buses, has also drawn considerable comment. About the only feature which has drawn some negative reaction is a 2-car train, 152 feet long, carrying 400-500 passengers, propelled by over 800hp, coming up to a hazardous situation and going "beep". A more appropriate audible alarm is being considered--one that cannot be mistaken for a Volkswagen beetle of several years back. The CTC-dictated strobe lights never materialized, since on reading the fine print of the Railway Act the CTC discovered they have absolutely no jurisdiction over the line.

The cars and all the stations feature facilities for the handicapped. One door of each car is arranged for wheel chair access and features a built-in belt to keep the wheel chair in place. The surface level stations have ramps for wheel chairs and the two underground stations have elevator access--restricted to the handicapped and the elderly.

Central Station and its near neighbor Churchill are both underground, and are so similar in design that one must read the signs to be sure which station he is in. Both feature superb lighting and wide platforms, and both have temporary history displays in their mezzanines. Commendably, neither station was opened in a half-finished state--rather, both stations are complete except for a few platform signs. Behind apparently finished walls, however, lies a vast amount of potential retail store space, still unleased. In a very welcome move, these walls have not been covered with an ugly string of "For Rent" or "Opening Soon" signs. Instead the walls have been finished, and a series of displays depicting human history (in Central Station) and natural history (in Churchill Station) have been created in what will eventually be store windows.

Rising to the first of the surface stations, the smartly designed Stadium Station was basically finished, but mud paths leading to some entrances indicate that it didn't quite make it. Continuing on to Coliseum Station, a half-finished platform and impossible-to-find entrances are a giveaway that the contractor did not finish on schedule. Predictably, there has been considerable confusion about the



two adjacent stations, Stadium and Coliseum, not only by the general traveling public but by train operators as well, who have been known to interchange the two names when announcing a station stop. However, a city which learned to live with numbered streets and avenues can learn to cope with this confusion.

The last station on the line, which was also the last to be started, was completed on time in every detail as far as the station proper goes. However, the Belvedere Station is a very simple structure without even a roof. Plans call for expanding the platform to double its present width, and double-tracking it with trains unloading, pulling thru the station, changing tracks, and loading on the southbound platform, but some land acquisition for this is still being arranged. Temporarily only one track is present, definitely a bottleneck for the system. The bus terminal and parking lots were not finished in time for opening, altho thanks to both dry May weather and some hurriedly applied gravel, temporary facilities are available. The many bus routes terminate across 129th Avenue from the station, while the permanent facility is being constructed across the track from the station but on the proper side of the road. Belvedere parking lot accommodates 400 cars and is filling rapidly as people become aware of this free facility. The Belvedere Station is strangely located, being neighbours of a horsemeat packing plant, a scrap yard, a rendering plant, a huge vacant field, and the Londonderry Hotel, itself just as strangely located. Better times are projected for this area of the city which at the moment reminds thousands of transferring passengers that the old image of a cow town hasn't quite disappeared, nor has the odour. Minutes later these passengers will be stepping into the real Edmonton world of 30-floor office buildings, 27,000-seat stadiums or 15,000-seat Coliseums.

A quirk at the Belvedere Station is the button that the train operators must press when ready to leave the station. This button does--nothing! Eventually it will actuate the crossing gates at 129th Avenue, installation of which has not yet begun. For the present the computer-controlled signal system is being conned into believing that it puts the gates down and a few seconds later clears the signal. The car then emits a couple of very undignified beeps from its horn, two flagmen stop traffic (mostly connecting buses) on 129th Avenue, and the car proceeds southbound to its rendezvous with the city 4½ miles away.

Passengers are a little mystified at the false start made from both Stadium and Coliseum Stations. Both have level crossings a short distance ahead. The false start is to trip the crossing gate which must descend before the signal system will allow a train to continue. This seems almost unreal in 1978 when Edmonton buses can trip traffic lights just by the driver's flipping a switch in the bus, and decades after a system was developed in Philadelphia to allow the Red Arrow cars to actuate crossing protection before they are ready to leave a station.

All in all, Edmonton now has a fine, efficient transportation system to the northeast quadrant, which makes a trip downtown a pleasure. One can only hope that the system will be promptly extended to become useful to residents of the entire city.

(Reprinted from the May issue of "The Marker", published by Alberta Pioneer Railway Association. Next issue: Riding the new Edmonton system.)

THE DOT'S REPORT ON AMTRAK

The Department of Transportation's preliminary report on the Amtrak route structure, entitled "A Reexamination of the Amtrak Route Structure", was made public on May 8. The following is a summary of the massive report. The first section of our summary consists of most of the Executive Summary found in the report:

AMTRAK'S PERFORMANCE

On the positive side, during Amtrak's seven years of operation, intercity rail passenger-trips and passenger-miles have increased at a faster rate than train-miles. In the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak has attracted a significant number of passengers from air and has demonstrated that, under proper conditions, the time conscious business traveler will use the train. During the 1973 energy crisis, a significant increase in ridership demonstrated that Amtrak is indeed a transportation alternative to which people will turn in times of severely constrained automobile fuel supplies.

The quality of service provided by Amtrak over the past seven years has varied as freight train delays, scheduling problems, and roadbed conditions have occasionally hampered operations. Although system on-time performance and scheduled speeds have generally decreased, certain aspects of service have improved. For example, the addition of new equipment has increased passenger comfort on several routes and can reasonably be expected to have a positive impact on market response.

As a result of the increases in passenger-trips and passenger-miles, coupled with fare increases, revenue has shown a steady increase since 1972. Unfortunately, costs have risen at a significantly higher rate than revenues, and the gap between costs and revenues has widened. While revenue in 1971 covered almost 50 percent of total costs, it covered only 37.4 percent of total costs in 1977. As a result, the deficit per revenue passenger-mile has more than doubled, from a 5.3 cent level in 1972 to a 12.7 cent level in 1977.

During Fiscal Year 1977, the last complete period for which data are available for analysis, Amtrak's patronage increased to 19.2 million passenger-trips, generating 4.3 billion passenger-miles. To achieve those levels, 31.6 million train-miles were operated over a 27 thousand mile route system. The Corporation's revenues during this period totaled $311.3 million, including $259.5 million derived from passenger tickets. Its total operating costs of $936.3 million included $95.2 million which was reimbursed by other agencies for work performed, leaving the net cost of operating the system at $841.1 million. The difference between those costs and total revenues resulted in a $529.8 million deficit, which is equivalent to an average loss of 12.3 cents per passenger-mile. Federal operating subsidy funds required to meet that deficit, after deducting non-cash charges (primarily depreciation), totaled $482.6 million.

With costs rising more rapidly than revenues, the levels of future Federal financial support of intercity rail passenger service which are implied by a continuation of today's trends are clearly troublesome. Controlling the rate of increase of the deficit requires a close look not only at the route system structure but also at the types of services offered and the current operating and pricing practices. The Department believes that a thorough detailed review and analysis of Amtrak's cost structure is one of the most urgent tasks to be addressed and proposes to work with the Amtrak Board to undertake such a review as an immediate priority.

DEVELOPING THE RECOMMENDED ROUTE STRUCTURE

In developing the recommended route structure, the Department evaluated numerous alternative Amtrak routes and services, exclusive of the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC, including the Amtrak-owned feeder lines from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Springfield, Massachusetts, was assumed to remain in place under all alternatives.

A series of five conceptually different alternative systems was developed and analyzed. The alternatives ranged from a system providing isolated short distance, daytime services only, to a system directly linking the various regions of the country, as well as providing additional services of interest primarily to individual states or groups of states. In refining the systems, certain population and market criteria were applied to select specific routes and services. Selections based on those criteria were modified by cost considerations and by the desire to allocate available resources equitably and to insure a measure of geographic balance and an appropriate mix of long and short distance services.

Operating cost and revenue estimates for each alternative system were developed by using models, based on FY 1977 actual data. Capital costs were estimated using data from Amtrak's most recent five-year plan. The systems were compared for a base year (FY 1977), and projections were made of the operating deficit for each system for the period 1979 through 1984. Existing Amtrak operating and pricing practices were assumed for the evaluations and projections.

THE RECOMMENDED ROUTE STRUCTURE

The Department's recommended route structure is illustrated in Figure ES-1 which shows the largest cities and key intermediate points to be served. Other points between those shown would also receive service. In several locations where service is recommended but a specific preferred routing has not been determined, Figure ES-1 indicates the existence of optional routings by a dotted line. Where specific routings are presented, they are considered preliminary, but preferable, based upon analysis of available data. The Department is anxious to receive additional information during the public hearing process, which will aid in the final route selection process.

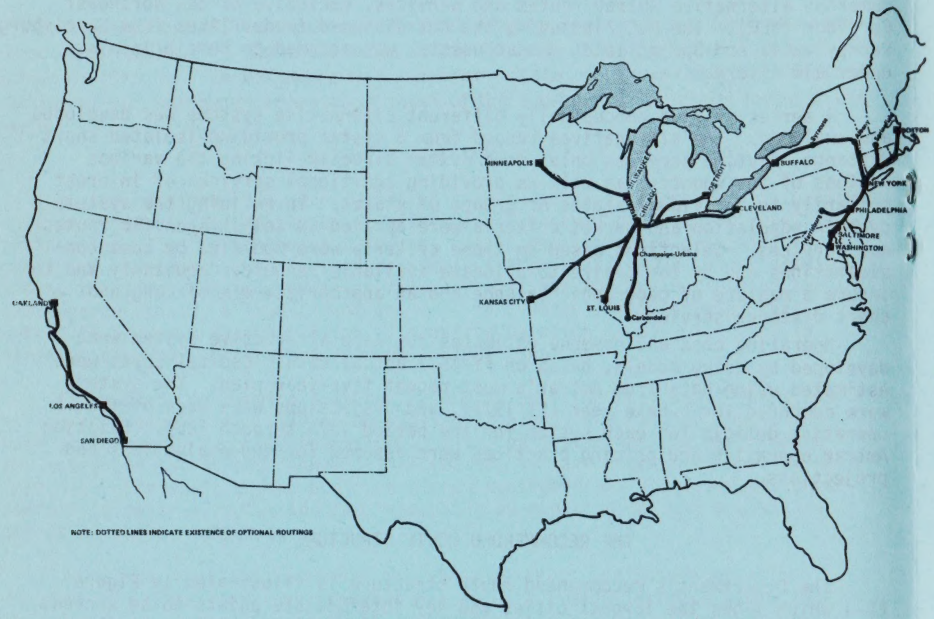
While the recommended system would terminate existing intercity rail service to some areas, it would also add service in new markets displaying high potential. It would provide for a basic level of national service, as well as for significant interregional service and service on high-potential feeder lines.

The 18,900-mile system would provide at least daily services on all routes. The basic national long distance east-west links would provide coast-to-coast service on northerly routes via Chicago and on southerly routes via New Orleans and Houston. The basic north-south links would provide daily service along the east and west coasts and from the Midwest to the South, completing a national system. The system would provide service to about 160 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), including the 36 largest cities. It is estimated that all of the services recommended could make a positive contribution to energy conservation.

Were the system to be in operation in FY 1979, it would require an estimated operating subsidy of $497 million. As it is, because present versions of authorizing legislation do not provide for implementation of the new system to begin until March of 1979, an operating subsidy of $575 million will actually be needed in FY 1979 to keep the existing system running for three quarters of the year. The projected operating subsidy need of the recommended system, in FY 1980, the first full year of its operation, is

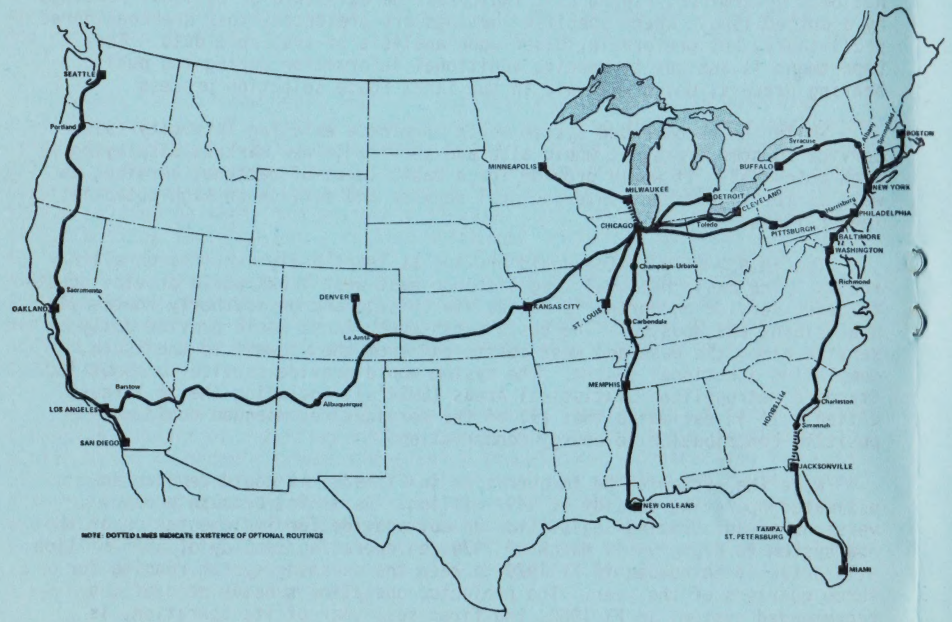
THE PLANS THE DOT REJECTED

SCENARIO A: SHORT-DISTANCE SYSTEM



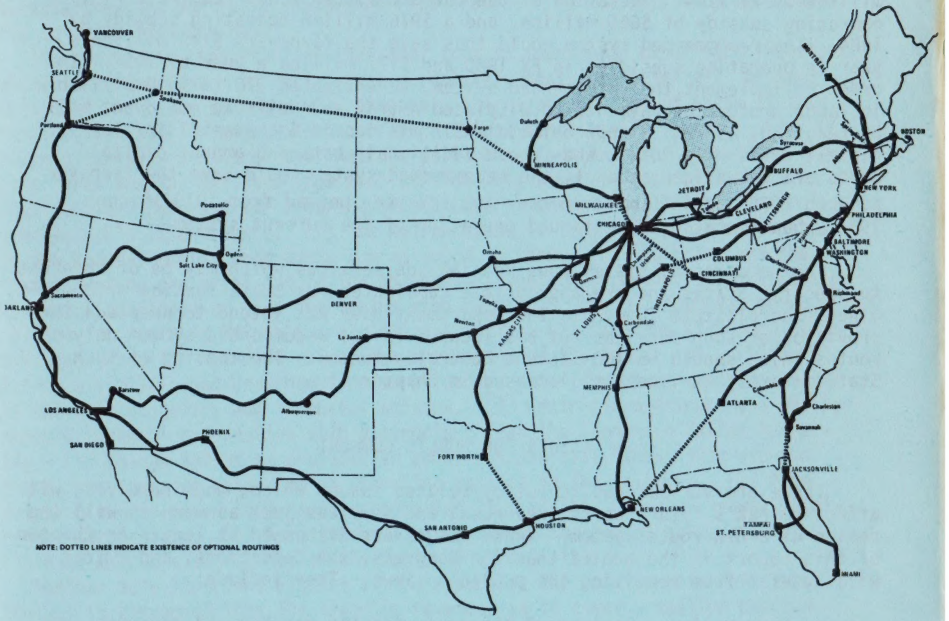
NOTE: DOTTED LINES INDICATE EXISTENCE OF OPTIONAL ROUTINGS

SCENARIO B: NATIONAL SYSTEM



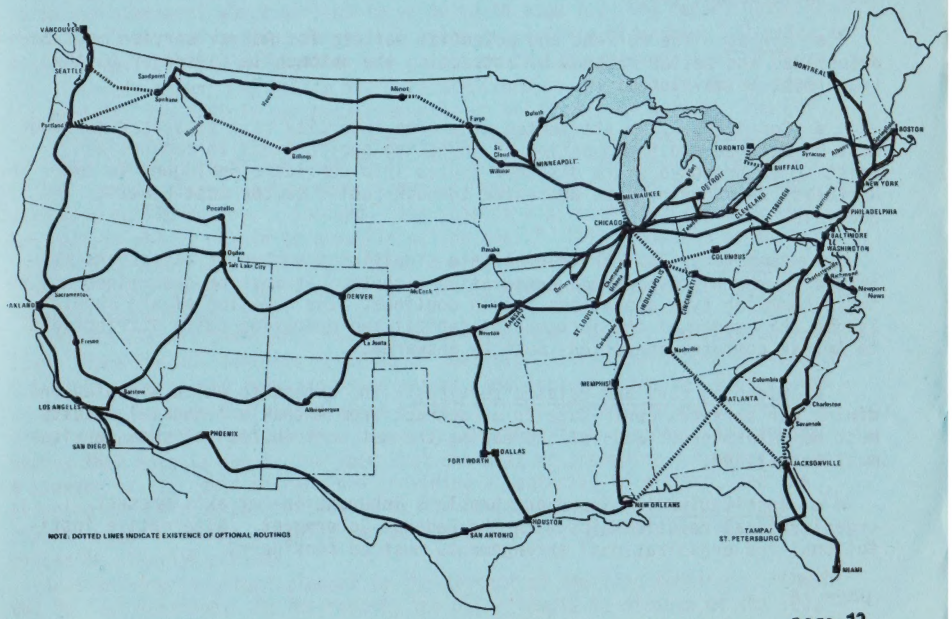
NOTE: DOTTED LINES INDICATE EXISTENCE OF OPTIONAL ROUTINGS

SCENARIO D: MODIFIED CURRENT SYSTEM



NOTE: DOTTED LINES INDICATE EXISTENCE OF OPTIONAL ROUTINGS

SCENARIO E: NATIONAL—INTERREGIONAL—INTRAREGIONAL SYSTEM



NOTE: DOTTED LINES INDICATE EXISTENCE OF OPTIONAL ROUTINGS

estimated to be $547 million. That amount is expected to grow to $799 million by FY 1984. Operation of the current system would require a FY 1980 operating subsidy of $665 million, and a $976 million operating subsidy by 1984. The recommended system would thus save the taxpayers $118 million a year in operating subsidies in FY 1980 and $177 million a year by 1984. In order to implement the recommended system, an estimated $70 to $300 million in labor protection payments to displaced Amtrak and railroad employees will be required, as well as approximately $12 million in incremental initial capital costs. In total, when those additional costs and annual capital costs are taken into account, the recommended system would save the taxpayer between $570 and $800 million over the six-year period from 1979 through 1984, when compared to continued operation of the current system.

The recommended system does not include services which may be of interest to specific States and are appropriate candidates for State funding or combined Federal/State funding. The Department does not intend to preclude the provision of such services but has focused in its recommended system only on routes which should be 100 percent Federally funded. The funding of such State interest services is discussed in Chapter 6.

ISSUES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There are various public policy-related issues which, when resolved, will affect Amtrak's future costs, revenues, and services just as much as will the design of a new route system. These issues are discussed at length in Chapter of this report in the belief that the Congress, the Department, and Amtrak will benefit from receiving the public's views. They include:

- Fare policy. Because of the ever-widening gap between revenues and costs, the objectives of the Amtrak fare structure must be explicitly determined and techniques of tariff construction must be used which will properly meet those objectives.

- Market. The current and potential markets for Amtrak service must be determined and better methods of attracting the automobile passenger to the train must be developed.

- Corridors. The attributes of a true intercity rail passenger corridor must be defined and the question of investing public funds in converting existing or proposed short distance routes into corridors analogous to the Northeast Corridor must be addressed through public sector cost-benefit analysis.

- Commuters. Amtrak transports a significant number of passengers who travel on sharply discounted commutation tickets. It must be determined whethe those commuter type operations should continue. The question of who should assume the burden of the incremental capital and operating costs attributable to Amtrak commuter operations must be answered.

- Sleeping cars and related services. The extent to which sleeping and dining car services contribute to or detract from Amtrak's financial results must be determined. Ways of increasing the net contribution of such services must be defined.

- Institutional. There are problems inherent in Amtrak's present organizational relationships with the Federal Government. Alternative institutional and organizational arrangements must be considered.

In our last issue we listed the trains that would be discontinued if the preliminary DOT plan were adopted as it stands. The DOT announced shortly after the plan appeared that the ADIRONDACK and the NIAGARA RAINBOW would not be cut because they are partially state-supported trains. The DOT said they were omitted in error from the map.

The route cuts, important as they are, tend to overshadow other very important elements of the plan. In fact, it is more likely that the routes will be kept than that the other controversial proposals are rejected. One of these is that the institutional arrangements under which Amtrak functions be changed. The DOT clearly wants more control over Amtrak, as it has since Amtrak's inception. The main "problems" as DOT sees them are: (1) The DOT, which is accountable to the President and Congress for adhering to the Federal budget, has limited control over Amtrak's expenditures. (2) The Amtrak Board is technically not accountable to the Federal budget once funds are advanced to them. (3) "Congress and the Administration are often put in the untenable situation of having to provide supplemental subsidies or have the trains stop running." The DOT suggests seven options for changing Amtrak's institutional status: (1) Keep the structure as is but strengthen the spending guidelines provisions of the Amtrak Act. (2) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation and place the Government in control of Amtrak's budgetary and financial affairs. (3) Restructure Amtrak as a wholly-owned Government corporation with a structure like the Tennessee Valley Authority. (4) Change Amtrak as proposed in pending House bill 11089 (with a 3-man Board, and expenses paid from an operating account in the Treasury. (5) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation like the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation. (6) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation. (7) Make Amtrak a sub-agency of the Dept. of Transportation.

Another very important element of the report is the consideration of fares. The DOT is concerned that the trend of revenues is to cover a smaller portion of total costs as time goes by. The percentage of costs covered by revenues has dropped in fiscal years 75, 76 and 77 to 44%, 39.8% and 37.4%, from over 55% in 73 and 74. (This is the area that Caltrans director Gianturco was alluding to in her statement about airline fares noted on page 7.) The report notes that there are 5 ways of setting fares: (1) price to maximize ridership; (2) price to minimize deficit; (3) relate the fare structure to the passenger cost of travel via alternate modes; (4) relate the fare structure to the cost of the service; (5) minimize the deficit per passenger-mile or other unit of output. The DOT is clearly biased in this matter, preferring Amtrak to raise fares further to minimize the deficit rather than to aim for maximizing ridership. The report states that low fares to maximize ridership "would clearly not be consistent with good public policy." Instead, "the objective of significantly reducing the deficit should remain as a public policy goal." This viewpoint seems to represent a significant anti-rail bias, coming from the DOT which encourages airlines to lower fares sharply while maintaining high subsidization of the airline industry without complaint.

Another element considered is that of sleeping car, dining and baggage services. Here the DOT suggests reducing or modifying dining and lounge service to cut costs, increasing food and drink prices, and designing any new dining cars so they can be operated with minimum staffing. The DOT is concerned about the lower monetary contribution from sleeping cars than from coaches. The report states that this is due to the fact that the cost of providing a berth-mile in a sleeper is 2.2 cents higher than providing a seat-mile in a coach, and the sleeping car revenue per berth-mile is 1.3 cents higher than coach revenue. The report suggests adding sleeping car surcharges in peak periods and discount prices in off-peak periods.

Another very important element is the concept of emerging corridors, brought out by Paul Reistrup. In the report, the DOT attempts to dispose of the idea that any corridors outside the Northeast Corridor are worth developing. In order

to effect this disposition of the emerging corridors, the report sets up three arbitrary characteristics which no route except the Northeast Corridor can meet. These standards are speed, frequency and location and distance boundaries. In terms of speed, the route must be capable of upgrading to 79mph at a minimal cost. A minimum of 5 morning and 5 afternoon/evening departures should be scheduled; in general, frequency and scheduling should be structured to meet the demand of the traveler desiring to make a one-day roundtrip with sufficient time at the point of destination. For location and distance boundaries, the DOT recommends a maximum length of 250 miles, and there must be dense population along the route. The section on corridors is one of the most weakly presented in the report, for it mentions only two proposed or existing corridors in its density comparisons--the Northeast Corridor and San Francisco-Los Angeles. The latter is clearly an extreme example of a proposed corridor without density along most of its route, but other examples are not considered. The report mentions the three primary emerging corridors given in Amtrak's 5-year plan--Chicago-Detroit, Los Angeles-San Diego, and Dallas-Ft. Worth-Houston-San Antonio. The report mentions two studies involving corridors--an FRA study of Nov 1977 and the USRA's preliminary system plan for Conrail. The DOT's conclusion: "None of the studies reviewed were (sic) supportive of the economic feasibility of rail passenger corridors. It may be concluded from them that the prospects for emerging corridors, with the exception of the Northeast Corridor, are not encouraging under prevailing conditions." But the report adds: "Whether any corridors should be selected for increased and upgraded rail service, and if so, what corridors, is in the view of the Department still open to question."

About commuter services, the study raises three questions; (1) Does Amtrak provide commuter service: (2) If so, should Amtrak be allowed to continue to provide such services? (3) If Amtrak is to continue as a commuter carrier, should the incremental losses and incremental capital investment pertaining to commuter service continue to be funded from intercity funds supplied by the general taxpayer?"

The general tone of the report is anti-passenger train. The report places an excessive emphasis upon financial considerations with very little concern for considerations of people matters, environmental impact, or quality of life. The study is a financial study, not a transportation study, and might have been performed by the Office of Management and Budget rather than by transportation professionals. There is virtually no concern with the person/mode interface. There is an almost total lack of perspective when confronting transportation financial matters, and thus the report fails even as a financial document, since its view is extremely lopsided. There is no attempt to compare subsidies for passenger trains with the large subsidies given other modes. One suspects that one of the major motivations for doing the report is that the bus industry is demanding support on the order of that given Amtrak. This is strongly hinted in Adams's introduction to the report: "We must remember that the primary surface intercity common carrier mode is the intercity bus. Any decision to expand the scope or intensity of Amtrak's operations must carefully consider the subsequent impact on private sector competitors." Interestingly, the report effectively criticizes the bus industry for not capitalizing on the reduction in train routes at the inception of Amtrak.

An example of the report's anti-rail tone is its attempts to attack one of rail's strong points, energy efficiency: "At best, Amtrak diesel powered operations outside the NEC are significantly more fuel efficient than the automobile and as fuel efficient as typical intercity bus operations. The San Diego-Los Angeles operation is an excellent example, with around 100 psgr mpg. At worst, Amtrak operations are much worse than even the automobile, let alone the bus. The FLORIDIAN...used more fuel in FY 1976 than if everyone had traveled by automobile and the mail had been carried by truck."

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	JAN	FEB	MAR
Metroliners	155,765	138,021	175,878
N.E. Corr. Conventional	315,942	310,531	382,688
New Haven-Springfield	24,523	24,388	26,896
NY-Philadelphia	253,206	213,811	254,670
Phila-Harrisburg	79,438	71,863	84,927
NY-Harrisburg	13,844	13,744	20,193
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	49,898	46,076	53,779
Chicago-St. Louis	15,347	15,171	17,281
Chicago-Milwaukee	18,985	17,879	23,797
Chicago-Detroit	32,962	31,676	39,695
Chicago-Carbondale	12,516	11,852	14,603
Chicago-Quincy	7,972	7,215	8,703
Los Angeles-San Diego	44,020	58,121	61,189
Seattle-Portland	4,403	4,574	6,217
Seattle-Vancouver	3,349	3,141	4,857
Washington-Cincinnati	4,046	4,049	5,236
Washington-Martinsburg	23,234	18,754	22,351
Oakland-Bakersfield	5,108	4,443	7,196
NY-Montreal	8,624	8,016	9,364
Chicago-Port Huron	6,248	5,688	8,343
Chicago-Dubuque	2,664	2,434	4,254
St. Paul-Duluth	3,146	4,032	5,426
Washington-Montreal	26,978	26,309	32,543
NY-Florida	48,602	52,219	72,694
Chicago-NY/Washington	13,078	9,961	15,533
Chicago-Cincinnati/Wash.	9,563	5,633	8,992
Kansas City-NY/Washington	12,186	9,553	15,215
Chicago-Seattle (north)	12,279	10,267	13,634
Chicago-Seattle (south)	14,736	13,133	16,961
Chicago-San Francisco	19,402	18,997	25,602
Chicago-Los Angeles	16,309	12,840	20,388
Chicago-Houston	15,992	13,223	24,387
Chicago-New Orleans	15,558	14,590	17,042
Chicago-Florida	8,679	7,446	13,777
Chicago-Laredo	8,624	7,870	11,397
Los Angeles-New Orleans	6,471	4,493	7,319
Los Angeles-Seattle	27,399	23,069	33,016
Chicago-NY/Boston	18,400	13,541	20,612
Boston-Newport News	47,678	44,307	56,515
NY-Savannah	27,578	25,795	35,828
Seattle-Salt Lake City	10,782	8,666	11,768
Boston-Tri-State	2,632	3,068	4,672
Special Trains	2,202	15,622	6,503

Systemwide ridership totals: Jan 1,390,368; Feb 1,355,081; Mar 1,704,941.

Amtrak released these ridership figures, for Jan, Feb and Mar 1978, on May 19 (see First March RTN for earlier figures). Starting with these, the data are reported in a new format, and ridership will be given on a fiscal year basis.

Footnotes: (1) Some NE Corridor riders are shown on Boston-Newport News, NY-Savannah, and Washington-Montreal routes. (2) Chicago-Carbondale includes Chicago-Champaign riders. (3) Some Seattle-Portland riders are now attributed to Seattle-Salt Lake City route. (4) Washington-Montreal route includes local Washington-Springfield traffic. (5) Chicago-Seattle (south) route includes Chicago-Duluth riders and Chicago-St. Paul local riders. (6) Boston-Newport News includes local Boston-DC riders. (7) NY-Savannah includes local NY-DC riders. (8) Boston-Tri-State route excludes local Boston-DC riders.

Jan ridership overall was down 4.7% from Jan 1977; Feb ridership was up 4.5% from Feb 1977; and Mar ridership (including Easter weekend) was up 10.1% over the previous March.

RAIL CANADA

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION has ordered the E&N Dayliner extended 5½ months, to Dec 13, 1978. Previously, the RDC run was set to expire Jun 30 pending appeals by the B.C. government. Photo at right shows the Dayliner in the snow at Courtenay, B.C. last Jan 24. Photo by Rex Lee Carlan.

VIA'S SUMMER PLAN, expected to become effective Jun 1, to re-route the transcontinental trains in a controversial manner, will likely be delayed. VIA Western VP-Operations Harold F. Murray told the press that it may be July before VIA officially takes over the two transcontinental services. In the meantime, present scheduling should continue. There are reports from various Canadian areas that ticket agents are totally confused about upcoming services and fares. Some are running out of railroad ticket stock and have no information about how to sell summer services. The reason for the delay in the summer changes is slowness in getting all union matters settled as VIA takes over.

VIA'S PROPOSED FARES for transcontinental trains are intermediate between CP fares and the lowest CN fares. VIA fares for Toronto-Vancouver are as follows: Basic fare $113, roundtrip $150, Daynighter $137, roomette $195. This compares with CN red fare $98, CN white $111, CN blue $127, CN roundtrip $139.70, white plus Dayniter $127, white plus roomette $189; and CP basic fare $133, CP roomette $232. Bus fare is $95.45, $129 roundtrip; air is $209, $240 charter class. Other proposed VIA fares are Montreal-Toronto $23 basic, $30 roundtrip, $43 roomette; Toronto-Ottawa $18 basic, $24 roundtrip, $38 roomette; Montreal-Ottawa $9 basic, $12 roundtrip, $19 club; Montreal-St. John, N.B. $31 basic, $41 roundtrip, $55 roomette. Children 5 and under are expected to ride free, while 6-12 pay half fare. All fares will be rounded to even dollars, with a $3 minimum. The average VIA fare is expected to be 8% above CN fares and 13% below CP, with the overall average 6% above existing fare levels. VIA estimates that these fare levels will reduce ridership 4% on CN routes and increase it 25% on CP lines.

THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE mini-cruise ship between Victoria, B.C. and Seattle is again in jeopardy. B.C. tourism minister Grace McCarthy wants to eliminate the ship after this year. There is no operational reason to drop it, according to reports--the move is strictly a political one. The ship's loadings are high as the season begins--1477 on May 18, 1400 on May 20. Supporters are asking readers to write: Premier Bill Bennett, Parliament Building, Victoria, B.C., Canada, to urge him to retain the ship on the Seattle-Victoria run after this year. Letters to editors of major newspapers are also helpful. The ship's schedule is shown in the current nationwide Amtrak timetable as "seasonal steamship service".

B.C.'S ROYAL HUDSON steam train schedule for 1978: train runs Wed thru Sun thru Jun 18; starting Jun 21 it runs daily except Tues thru Sep 10, then Fri, Sat, Sun only until close of season Oct 9. Leaves North Vancouver 10am; adult fare $6.50.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING will take place next on May 31, the last meeting for Paul Reistrup. The Board is expected to take a position on the DOT report at that time. The agenda of the meeting includes requests for commitments to the construction of the 12.6 miles of track missing on the LAKE SHORE line, rehabilitation of the on-board service support facility at NY's Penn Station, roof rehabilitation of the New Orleans depot and emergency track improvements in the N.E. Corridor..... STATE OF MINNESOTA was expected at last word to continue its subsidy of the ARROWHEAD service thru the end of 1978, but will study its "economic and social impacts"..... LINCOLN, ILLINOIS' FORMER GM&O depot has been sold to a party who will convert it into a restaurant. Amtrak's STATE HOUSE continues to stop at the unmanned station, and uses one room near the restaurant as a waiting room..... PITTSFIELD CITY COUNCIL (Mass.) is considering moving the present Amtrak station, some 3 miles from the city, to a downtown location in the proposed Pyramid Mall, a shopping complex adjacent to the tracks. Costs would be borne 50/50 by Amtrak and the city..... THE ICC PERMISSION to the Rock Island, reported last issue, to drop its two passenger trains was contingent upon no further complaints being filed with the ICC, or the ICC deciding to take up the case. It seems likely that a complaint would be filed to stop the impending May 29 discontinuance..... NATIONAL VISITOR CENTER at Washington Union Station --remember it? The House Public Works and Transportation Committee on May 15 agreed on a bill to put $36 million more into the center and finish it in a scaled-down version of the original. Secretary Adams was displeased with the plan, foreseeing need for more interior space in the future. The bill calls for building a 3-lane road between the Amtrak terminal and the visitor center.....

* * *

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION in May proposed a new regulation that airline passengers be required to stay in their seats and keep seat belts fastened all during a flight except when moving to the rest room. This is to guard against injuries from unexpected air turbulence or sudden aircraft maneuvers.....

RAILROAD PASSENGER WEEK in April was declared by the governors of Arizona and Vermont, in addition to the Missouri declaration we reported before.....

THE ARKANSAS ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers held an organization meeting on May 27 in Little Rock. Interested individuals can contact Bill Pollard at 413 Brahma, Conway AR 72032..... THE COAST STARLIGHT struck an overturned auto on the tracks at Simi Valley CA on its southbound run on May 3. An off-duty policeman and two passersby pulled the car's two female occupants to safety just 15 seconds before the train's impact. The Amtrak engine suffered slight damages but there were no injuries. One occupant of the auto was injured when the car went out of control and overturned..... AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION announced on May 19 a new advertising campaign by Ally & Gargano Inc. of NY. It emphasizes the "ills of driving" on a 900-mile trip, using newspaper ads and billboards. Spot TV commercials should be appearing soon also. Auto-Train said its schedule will be reduced by eliminating service on Tues & Wed from May 23 thru Oct 25; Thurs during Sept; and Thanksgiving Day, Nov 23. The company's fares will be adjusted, with ICC approval pending, to institute a new year-round fare. The new one-way rate will be $225 for an auto and driver, with each extra adult passenger paying $70. For the first time, children under 12 pay half the adult fare ($35) throughout the year. Regular bedroom rates remain at $85, $100 and $115 for a 2-, 3- and 4-bed compartment respectively. If tickets are bought before Jun 15, they will be good after that date, when the new fares become effective.....

IF TRAIN 6, the eastbound SFZ, is running late enough to miss trains 3 and 15 at Chicago, westbound passengers destined to points on those Santa Fe lines will detrain at Galesburg IL and be taxied at Amtrak expense between Galesburg stations for the transfer to be made. If train 4 is late and passengers are destined to points west of Galesburg on the BN, the same transfer operations apply at Galesburg. The above Amtrak notice went out to employees recently.....

CANDIDATE KEN MADDY, hoping to run for Governor of California this year, climaxes his primary campaign with a whistlestop tour from Stockton to Bakersfield on Jun 3, leaving Stockton at 8:30am and reaching Bakersfield 4:35pm.....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER is presently detouring between Seattle and Spokane via Wenatchee while the BN rebuilds its storm-damaged Stampede Pass route. Amtrak announced May 22 that it will continue substitute bus service Seattle-Spokane and vice versa during this time to serve Ellensburg, Yakima and Pasco WA.....

* * *

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA arriving eastbound at St. Paul/Minneapolis on May 21 was 6 hours late. Due to flooding and a washed-out bridge it was detoured on the 20th over Milwaukee Road from Butte to Miles City MT. The train was using experimental fuel car 400 between F40PHR engines 265 and 264 (ex-593 & 587) and carried 3 domes..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, was seen in Poughkeepsie on May 20 with F40PHR #263 along with E8 unit 465 and 11 conventional cars. E units are the normal power for this train..... EX-AMTRAK COACH 6433 was recently noted at the Rio Grande depot at Green River, Utah. Sources say the car will become an office for a new coal mining operation at Buffalo Butte.....

AMTRAK AND HERTZ Rent A Car are starting a new joint program Jun 1 that will allow an Amtrak customer to reserve a rental car when making train reservations ..... THE MYSTERY PASSENGER who apparently fell off the LAKE SHORE LIMITED in northwestern Indiana last Sep 18 and was killed was found to be a Colombian with an expired passport, and it was reasoned that he jumped off to escape detection by authorities in Chicago. The death was ruled accidental, reports the NY Times..... CONNECTIONS TO MONTEREY and Carmel CA are now available daily from the COAST STARLIGHT at Salinas. Monterey Peninsula Transit does the bus service on Mon-Sat in both directions, and on Sundays there is a Greyhound connection from the northbound train only at 5:55pm for Ft. Ord and Monterey.....

A REPORT IN a recent issue of TravelAge West magazine describing Amfleet cars says: "Except for the large view windows, the interior of the Amfleet coaches is much like that of an airplane." It's all in your point of view, notes the reader who spotted the description..... CHICAGO TO PORTLAND or Seattle fare changes took effect Apr 30, so that it now costs the same to use the SFZ-PIONEER route as the EMPIRE BUILDER or NORTH COAST HIAWATHA.....

THE SLEEPERS ADDED to the INTER-AMERICAN effective Jun 25 southbound and Jun 27 northbound will run Chicago-Laredo, not Chicago-Ft. Worth, Amtrak said on May 25. The electrified sleepers will run tri-weekly on the daily train thru Labor Day (Sep 4). Amtrak said it's the first time the train has run daily with "marketable" times at Dallas, a connection with the NATIONAL, and on a faster schedule, and hopes are that ridership will increase. On-time performance should improve the first week of June, when all new speed limit signs are up..... THE MARYLAND DOT wants another commuter train on the Rockville-Gaithersburg-Brunswick line out of Washington, to be run by B&O and funded 100% by the state. The train could get going by mid-June. It would leave Washington at 4:25pm and arrive there at 7:10am. Rail commuter lines out of Washington are said to be growing by leaps and bounds in patronage, including the BLUE RIDGE, which is up to 7 Amfleet cars. The new CHESAPEAKE is carrying standees frequently and Amtrak says it may need a 4-car train (see last issue).....

A SPECIAL TRAIN, the "Israel Express" was run by Amtrak May 17 NY-DC and return with 14 cars and 1100 pro-Israel demonstrators. Consist was one E60 engine and 14 Amfleet cars including 2 Amcafes.....

Mailing date of this issue: May 26/27, 1978

EXPRESS ADS

RTN READERS: SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDLY ADVERTISERS! Courteous, competent help in securing the best available accommodations on Amtrak, CN, CP, Princess Patricia, etc. Write GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. Pay by check or credit card--we make it easy!

MEXICO RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--October 8-21, 1978--"Trip of a Thousand Wonders (4.1% grades)" & Copper Canyon (open gondola). Private cars SOONERLAND & MISTLETOE plus Mexican sleeping cars. Mexico City Metro subway, shops, streetcars and SAHAGUN car factory, Guadalajara subway and shops. Ride on locomotive. Trip starts in Oklahoma (join anywhere). For full details and map, write: Howard Thornton, Midwest Travel Service, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City OK 73110

Summer West Coast Rail Sale. $75.00 roundtrip San Francisco to Seattle/Vancouver. $134.00 from Los Angeles. Other summer excursions including the NEW USA RAIL PASS family plan. Details from the rail specialists, Let's Travel Tours, 3780 Elizabeth Street, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 787-8350.

8-Day Rail Adventure--Nashville to Glacier Park. Escorted from Nashville. All meals, hotel accommodations, transfers, sightseeing, and most gratuities included. Fly or rail to Chicago, then bedroom on EMPIRE BUILDER. Depart August 1 from Nashville (price $735). Join tour in Chicago (reduced price). Send for brochure: Jay Smith Travel, #2 Cookeville Mall, Cookeville TN 38501.

Boston-Bellows Falls VT roundtrip Jun 24. First daylite train B&M CT River line in 12 yrs. Photo runbys, optional side trips to Steamtown & White River Jct. $34.95. Mass. Bay Railroad Enthusiasts, Box 136, Dept N, Ward Hill MA 01830.

MIRABEL AIRPORT? Take CP Dayliner 133 from Montreal or CP 132/134 from Ottawa-Hull to Mirabel CP station & transfer to Albert Martel's Cab. Call 514-258-2408 to reserve in advance. Taxi takes 10 minutes, costs $4 all-inclusive. VIA Rail to Mirabel! TRANSPORT 2000 OTTAWA Region, Box 300, Chelsea, Que. JOX 1NO.

INDEPENDENCE LIMITED V will operate Lexington KY to Greensboro NC via Asheville on July 1-3 with Southern 2-10-4 #610 & open-window cars plus limited extra fare observation lounge serv. avail. RNRH, Box 13222, Roanoke VA 24032, 703-366-5211 eves.

Denver CO July 8-9: Mile High RAILFAIR '78. Jefferson Co. Fairgrounds, 15200 W. 6 Ave. Over 60 exhibitors incl. Amtrak, Railroads, Publishers, Authors, Models, Artists, Railroadiana Dealers, Hobby Shops, Collectors, NARP, Operating Layouts & more. MOVIES - PHOTO CONTEST - DOOR PRIZES, incl. tickets for Rio Grande Zephyr to Glenwood Springs CO, provided by Porreca Slides. Hours: Sat. 10am-7pm; Sun. 10am-4pm. Donation: $1.00 adults, 75¢ sr. citizens, 50¢ children under 12. Come to the "Premier" Railroad Show in America. For info, send large SAE to: NRHS, P. O. Box 5181, Denver CO 80217.

TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

Express, Railroad & Traction uniform buttons. Send $1 for sample & list. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen MA 01844. See you at Edaville June 18 & 19, 1978.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal, Pullman items from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. See us at Mile High RAILFAIR '78, Golden, Colo. July 8 & 9. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy large or small railroad collections. Also trade.

STREET-CAR days in Seattle: "Trolley Trails Through the West", Vol. II, new illustrated edition. $3 including postage. Wilson Brothers Publications, Dept. RTN, Box 712, Yakima WA 98907.

BREAKFAST ABOARD THE CAPITOL LIMITED, rolling east thru Harper's Ferry--something worth remembering. Did you order the King's Breakfast? Frame this fine Capitol Limited 1970 Breakfast menu reprint. Only $1 plus 25¢ postage and handling from The Pullman Travel Company, Box 6843, Chicago, IL 60680. (SSAE brings list)

ROCK ISLAND TABLECLOTH BARGAIN. 32 x 52 tablecloth (woven crest and date) plus two large napkins (crest and date): very good $10.00; good $8.50; and fair $6.25--shipping paid.
Fahrenwald, 3643 N. Greenview, Chicago, IL 60613. Three weeks' delivery--items may require pressing.

FOR SALE: 52 assorted Railway Progress magazines, publication discontinued; Years 1950s, $5.25 postpd. Clinton O. Larson, Box 611, La Crosse, Wis. 54601.

EMPLOYEE TIMETABLES FOR SALE - New 8-page list of 1000 ranging from 1892 to 1978--from the ALTON to the PENN CENTRAL--from the EAST JORDAN and SOUTHERN to the YOUNGSTOWN & SUBURBAN. List free for SSAE. Carl Loucks, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

Pacific Electric negatives wanted. Also other Calif. traction negatives wanted. Contact C. A. Rasmussen, PO Box 2105, Huntington Park CA 90255.

BUYING PUBLIC TIMETABLES before 1950. Large, small lots. Send details, price wanted, SSAE for quick reply. CLOVER, 140 Sabal Dr, Ft. Myers Beach FL 33931.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $1.25 per square inch. Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jul 7-10: LAKESHORE LTD excursion Springfield MA-Cleveland RT to 3 Red Sox versus Cleveland Indians games. $89 double, $100 single incl. hotel & box seats at games. Red Sox Rail Excur. Committee, 324 Little River Rd, Westfield MA 01085.

Oct 8: PENNSYLVANIA LTD, with GG-1 4935, NYP-Strasburg RR, Lancaster Co. PA, steam on Strasburg. $34, under 12 $32. SSAE to Trip Committee, Tri-state Chapter NRHS, PO Box 255, Dover NJ 07801. Over 385 miles of train riding.

Jul 1-3: INDEPENDENCE LTD V, Lexington KY-Greensboro NC via Asheville, SR #610 steamer & open-window cars, extra-fare obs lounge avail. Roanoke Chapter, NRHS, Box 13222, Roanoke VA 24032. Phone 703-366-5211 after 6pm.

Jun 5, 10, 11, 17, 18: Chessie Steam Special excursions from Chicago area. Jun 5: Chicinnati-Chicago one-way; Jun 10: Chicago-Hartford MI RT. Recorded info, call 312-652-3400. Ill. Rwy Museum, Box 431, Union, McHenry County, IL 60180.

YEARBOOKS AND SHOESTRINGS

When will RTN's Rail Travel Yearbook appear? Why is RTN publishing another book instead of getting the Yearbook out?

Publication of ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL (see adjoining announcement) is going to delay the Yearbook a little bit more, and we owe it to Yearbook purchasers to explain why we are doing this. The basic reason is that RTN's publisher, Message Media, is very small. We do not have the large resources to do a number of things we'd like to do all at once. We operate on a shoestring, and much hard work goes into RTN behind the scenes, and there is never enough time available. We are trying to perform a public service, tho we are not organized as a non-profit organization and we have no government grants to help us. We found ourselves with a lot of information we had to get out to the public in the face of public hearings on the Amtrak system revision beginning. Therefore we made the hard decision to go ahead with it, knowing our readers would agree that this effort is more important than the Yearbook at this moment.

Thank you again for your continued support and encouragement.

Announcing

THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE PUBLICATION EVER PRODUCED BY RTN!

In view of the enormity of the decisions about American rail travel to be made in the next few months, the publishers of RTN are producing a new book of important, informative and thought-provoking material about American rail passenger transportation and its place in our overall transportation system.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL"

SOME TOPICS COVERED:

* Economics of passenger trains & public transportation
* The electrification of conventional passenger cars
* Should the National Park Service support trains to parks?
* Combining new and conventional cars on Amtrak trains
* Problems of the nation's intercity bus system
* The nature and handling of the transportation bureaucracy
* Special reference to the DOT's zero-base Amtrak system plan

Edited by James Russell, Editor of Rail Travel News.
Articles by James Russell, Glenn Lee, Kenneth Roch, Robert Rynerson and others.

Book is now in preparation, publication date May 31, 1978. Orders will be filled in order received. Approximately 50 pages, paper cover. Complete contents will be given later.

Price $3.95 per copy, plus 55¢ postage and handling, total $4.50. (Tax is included in price.) Use order form or a separate sheet.

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Send me __ copy(ies) of ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL. Enclosed is $3.95 + 55¢ postage & handling per copy (total $4.50 each).

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atmosphere of the whole day renewed my faith in the STARLIGHT, a train we have often been critical of, especially in on-board services. I hope every STARLIGHT rider this year enjoys this interesting train as much as I did that Friday.

Rogers Whitaker reaches his 2,500,000th mile of rail travel in the diner of the southbound COAST STARLIGHT on May 12. Photos by the author.

CARS & CONSISTS

*NORTH STAR, train 9, Chicago May 4: engine 233 (F40PHR); cars 1249 (mail to Duluth), 2915 "Pacific Hills", Amfleet cars 20225, 21846, 21156, 21238.

*PIONEER, train 26, Seattle May 8: engine 215 (F40); cars 21865, 21859, Amdinette 20221, 2995 "Pine Brook", baggage 1261.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 18, St. Paul/Minneapolis May 10: engines 242, 241 (F40PHR's); heater car 665; cars SP6750, 1570, 4520, dome 9479, 4547, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 8046, 2658 "Silver Dale", 2661 "Silver Plain".

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 30, May 16, Kansas City: engines 418, 408 (E's); cars 1198, 1046, 2154 "Silver Orchid", diner-observation 8302, 3800, 5435, 5412, (deadheads:) dome 9365 "River View", 8084 "Moultrie".

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Richmond VA May 11: engines 645, 608; cars 1086, 1428, 2536 "Thrush", 3213 "Nutmeg State", 4465, 4416, 4414, 8009, 3335, 4565, 4573, 5414, 2537 "Wren".

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, train 1, Edmonton May 18: engines 6506, 6605, 6607; cars 9648, 5560, 5500, 752, 5714, 5707, "Edenwold", "Eureka", dome "Jasper", 1370, "Riverview", "Emperor", "Erickson", "Saskatchewan River", bus. cars 15110, 93.

REACTIONS TO THE DOT PLAN FOR AMTRAK

Reactions in the national press to the DOT's preliminary plan to cut 8100 miles from the Amtrak system have been mixed about 50/50. On a more local level, citizens and legislators have shown distress and fury in their public statements. Nebraska mayors, Iowa lobbyists, the Kansas City Times, the Nebraska Congressional delegation, San Francisco papers, Nevada Senator Cannon, both Colorado Senators, Wyoming Senator Hansen, Wyoming's Congressional delegation, the Rocky Mountain News, the Cleveland Press, Daytona Beach Evening News, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the St. Petersburg Times are some of the sources of statements we have seen rejecting the DOT/Adams slashes.

One retort that rail supporters are calling "dynamite" came a few days ago from Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco. In a letter to DOT Secretary Adams she pointed out that the yearly subsidy for the entire Amtrak system would barely build 3 miles of freeway at today's costs. She also noted that if the costs of air travel were fully allocated and passed on to the passenger (as Adams would like to do with Amtrak in forcing it to raise fares) a one-way airline ticket from California to New York would cost $1,000.

Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen and the two Dallas newspapers both went on record as favoring the Amtrak cuts (this is alluded to in Dr. Monaghan's letter on p. 3). The Chicago Sun-Times said it was "Time to trim Amtrak".

Readers are asking for RTN's view of this matter, and we give it below.

RTN'S VIEW OF THE DOT PLAN

RTN takes the following editorial stance regarding the proposed Amtrak cuts:

(1) No present route should be cut from the Amtrak system.

(2) Several routes deserve to be added soon to the system.

(3) Some re-routings and realignments of services would be desirable.

(4) Increased train frequencies on a number of routes are highly desirable.

(5) Arrangements should be made for Amtrak to carry more mail and express to increase revenues.

(6) Additional non-Amtrak funding for trains should be found, for example in the National Park Service assisting in subsidizing trains that serve parks.

(7) Any additional budget cuts should be made at the management level within Amtrak, where the corporation is overweighted with personnel.

(8) The DOT should adopt an explicit policy of limiting the number of motor vehicles on the roads (currently 10,000 are added daily) and encouraging public transportation by the many economic incentives it has at its disposal.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Altho I am not a member of any anti-highway organization, I now understand how they can prosper and why they picket the (DOT) building. It's because people like me write reasonable letters and get no response. That is insensitive. Guess who is looking for an anti-highway group to join."

--Reader Joseph Vranich quoted in the Washington Star, May 20

FAMOUS LAST WORDS***

"A Stanford Research Institute economist says the number of train passengers between San Francisco and Portland will continue to decline until there aren't enough left to support any passenger service... He said competition from autos, buses and planes has cut into the number of train passengers for the past 18 years, and the trend cannot be reversed."

--From UPI wire report of the late 1960's

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

EDMONTON'S TRANSIT SYSTEM OPENS

Quiet is the word for the new Edmonton transit system, but it certainly cannot be applied to the madhouse opening of April 23. That day the system carried about double its rated load, besides contending with the vagaries of a brand new system--one of which was a switch failure at Belvedere which almost stopped the system for two hours. By 5pm the system was running fairly well again but a car had to be taken out of service, causing a long delay. Since opening day the system has been running with few problems and now seems to be an accepted part of life for thousands of Edmontonians living in the northeast and even the northwest sectors of the city. Non-rush hour passenger counts have been much heavier than forecast, proving that a spacious, quiet and predictable transportation system can actually generate off-hour traffic, an action which should go a long way toward reducing the deficit of public transit in Edmonton.

Most of the thousands of Edmontonians who have been able to take a transit trip have been amazed by the silence of the cars, as heard from within the trains or at trackside or platform. They have also been impressed with how smoothly the cars ride, and their rapid, positive acceleration. Those who have been on trips where the malfunctioning trackside speed monitoring system has acted up or a red signal has been passed have also been duly impressed by the very positive stopping power of the braking system! The fully applied brakes bring a 2-car train to a stop in one train length, altho with a certain degree of discomfort to standing passengers.

The visual impact of the 2-car trainsets, painted in their smart white, blue and yellow scheme which agrees with the trains far more than the buses, has also drawn considerable comment. About the only feature which has drawn some negative reaction is a 2-car train, 152 feet long, carrying 400-500 passengers, propelled by over 800hp, coming up to a hazardous situation and going "beep". A more appropriate audible alarm is being considered--one that cannot be mistaken for a Volkswagen beetle of several years back. The CTC-dictated strobe lights never materialized, since on reading the fine print of the Railway Act the CTC discovered they have absolutely no jurisdiction over the line.

The cars and all the stations feature facilities for the handicapped. One door of each car is arranged for wheel chair access and features a built-in belt to keep the wheel chair in place. The surface level stations have ramps for wheel chairs and the two underground stations have elevator access--restricted to the handicapped and the elderly.

Central Station and its near neighbor Churchill are both underground, and are so similar in design that one must read the signs to be sure which station he is in. Both feature superb lighting and wide platforms, and both have temporary history displays in their mezzanines. Commendably, neither station was opened in a half-finished state--rather, both stations are complete except for a few platform signs. Behind apparently finished walls, however, lies a vast amount of potential retail store space, still unleased. In a very welcome move, these walls have not been covered with an ugly string of "For Rent" or "Opening Soon" signs. Instead the walls have been finished, and a series of displays depicting human history (in Central Station) and natural history (in Churchill Station) have been created in what will eventually be store windows.

Rising to the first of the surface stations, the smartly designed Stadium Station was basically finished, but mud paths leading to some entrances indicate that it didn't quite make it. Continuing on to Coliseum Station, a half-finished platform and impossible-to-find entrances are a giveaway that the contractor did not finish on schedule. Predictably, there has been considerable confusion about the

two adjacent stations, Stadium and Coliseum, not only by the general traveling public but by train operators as well, who have been known to interchange the two names when announcing a station stop. However, a city which learned to live with numbered streets and avenues can learn to cope with this confusion.

The last station on the line, which was also the last to be started, was completed on time in every detail as far as the station proper goes. However, the Belvedere Station is a very simple structure without even a roof. Plans call for expanding the platform to double its present width, and double-tracking it with trains unloading, pulling thru the station, changing tracks, and loading on the southbound platform, but some land acquisition for this is still being arranged. Temporarily only one track is present, definitely a bottleneck for the system. The bus terminal and parking lots were not finished in time for opening, altho thanks to both dry May weather and some hurriedly applied gravel, temporary facilities are available. The many bus routes terminate across 129th Avenue from the station, while the permanent facility is being constructed across the track from the station but on the proper side of the road. Belvedere parking lot accommodates 400 cars and is filling rapidly as people become aware of this free facility. The Belvedere Station is strangely located, being neighbours of a horsemeat packing plant, a scrap yard, a rendering plant, a huge vacant field, and the Londonderry Hotel, itself just as strangely located. Better times are projected for this area of the city which at the moment reminds thousands of transferring passengers that the old image of a cow town hasn't quite disappeared, nor has the odour. Minutes later these passengers will be stepping into the real Edmonton world of 30-floor office buildings, 27,000-seat stadiums or 15,000-seat Coliseums.

A quirk at the Belvedere Station is the button that the train operators must press when ready to leave the station. This button does--nothing! Eventually it will actuate the crossing gates at 129th Avenue, installation of which has not yet begun. For the present the computer-controlled signal system is being conned into believing that it puts the gates down and a few seconds later clears the signal. The car then emits a couple of very undignified beeps from its horn, two flagmen stop traffic (mostly connecting buses) on 129th Avenue, and the car proceeds southbound to its rendezvous with the city 4½ miles away.

Passengers are a little mystified at the false start made from both Stadium and Coliseum Stations. Both have level crossings a short distance ahead. The false start is to trip the crossing gate which must descend before the signal system will allow a train to continue. This seems almost unreal in 1978 when Edmonton buses can trip traffic lights just by the driver's flipping a switch in the bus, and decades after a system was developed in Philadelphia to allow the Red Arrow cars to actuate crossing protection before they are ready to leave a station.

All in all, Edmonton now has a fine, efficient transportation system to the northeast quadrant, which makes a trip downtown a pleasure. One can only hope that the system will be promptly extended to become useful to residents of the entire city.

(Reprinted from the May issue of "The Marker", published by Alberta Pioneer Railway Association. Next issue: Riding the new Edmonton system.)

THE DOT'S REPORT ON AMTRAK

The Department of Transportation's preliminary report on the Amtrak route structure, entitled "A Reexamination of the Amtrak Route Structure", was made public on May 8. The following is a summary of the massive report. The first section of our summary consists of most of the Executive Summary found in the report:

AMTRAK'S PERFORMANCE

On the positive side, during Amtrak's seven years of operation, intercity rail passenger-trips and passenger-miles have increased at a faster rate than train-miles. In the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak has attracted a significant number of passengers from air and has demonstrated that, under proper conditions, the time conscious business traveler will use the train. During the 1973 energy crisis, a significant increase in ridership demonstrated that Amtrak is indeed a transportation alternative to which people will turn in times of severely constrained automobile fuel supplies.

The quality of service provided by Amtrak over the past seven years has varied as freight train delays, scheduling problems, and roadbed conditions have occasionally hampered operations. Although system on-time performance and scheduled speeds have generally decreased, certain aspects of service have improved. For example, the addition of new equipment has increased passenger comfort on several routes and can reasonably be expected to have a positive impact on market response.

As a result of the increases in passenger-trips and passenger-miles, coupled with fare increases, revenue has shown a steady increase since 1972. Unfortunately, costs have risen at a significantly higher rate than revenues, and the gap between costs and revenues has widened. While revenue in 1971 covered almost 50 percent of total costs, it covered only 37.4 percent of total costs in 1977. As a result, the deficit per revenue passenger-mile has more than doubled, from a 5.3 cent level in 1972 to a 12.7 cent level in 1977.

During Fiscal Year 1977, the last complete period for which data are available for analysis, Amtrak's patronage increased to 19.2 million passenger-trips, generating 4.3 billion passenger-miles. To achieve those levels, 31.6 million train-miles were operated over a 27 thousand mile route system. The Corporation's revenues during this period totaled $311.3 million, including $259.5 million derived from passenger tickets. Its total operating costs of $936.3 million included $95.2 million which was reimbursed by other agencies for work performed, leaving the net cost of operating the system at $841.1 million. The difference between those costs and total revenues resulted in a $529.8 million deficit, which is equivalent to an average loss of 12.3 cents per passenger-mile. Federal operating subsidy funds required to meet that deficit, after deducting non-cash charges (primarily depreciation), totaled $482.6 million.

With costs rising more rapidly than revenues, the levels of future Federal financial support of intercity rail passenger service which are implied by a continuation of today's trends are clearly troublesome. Controlling the rate of increase of the deficit requires a close look not only at the route system structure but also at the types of services offered and the current operating and pricing practices. The Department believes that a thorough detailed review and analysis of Amtrak's cost structure is one of the most urgent tasks to be addressed and proposes to work with the Amtrak Board to undertake such a review as an immediate priority.

DEVELOPING THE RECOMMENDED ROUTE STRUCTURE

In developing the recommended route structure, the Department evaluated numerous alternative Amtrak routes and services, exclusive of the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC, including the Amtrak-owned feeder lines from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Springfield, Massachusetts, was assumed to remain in place under all alternatives.

A series of five conceptually different alternative systems was developed and analyzed. The alternatives ranged from a system providing isolated short distance, daytime services only, to a system directly linking the various regions of the country, as well as providing additional services of interest primarily to individual states or groups of states. In refining the systems, certain population and market criteria were applied to select specific routes and services. Selections based on those criteria were modified by cost considerations and by the desire to allocate available resources equitably and to insure a measure of geographic balance and an appropriate mix of long and short distance services.

Operating cost and revenue estimates for each alternative system were developed by using models, based on FY 1977 actual data. Capital costs were estimated using data from Amtrak's most recent five-year plan. The systems were compared for a base year (FY 1977), and projections were made of the operating deficit for each system for the period 1979 through 1984. Existing Amtrak operating and pricing practices were assumed for the evaluations and projections.

THE RECOMMENDED ROUTE STRUCTURE

The Department's recommended route structure is illustrated in Figure ES-1 which shows the largest cities and key intermediate points to be served. Other points between those shown would also receive service. In several locations where service is recommended but a specific preferred routing has not been determined, Figure ES-1 indicates the existence of optional routings by a dotted line. Where specific routings are presented, they are considered preliminary, but preferable, based upon analysis of available data. The Department is anxious to receive additional information during the public hearing process, which will aid in the final route selection process.

While the recommended system would terminate existing intercity rail service to some areas, it would also add service in new markets displaying high potential. It would provide for a basic level of national service, as well as for significant interregional service and service on high-potential feeder lines.

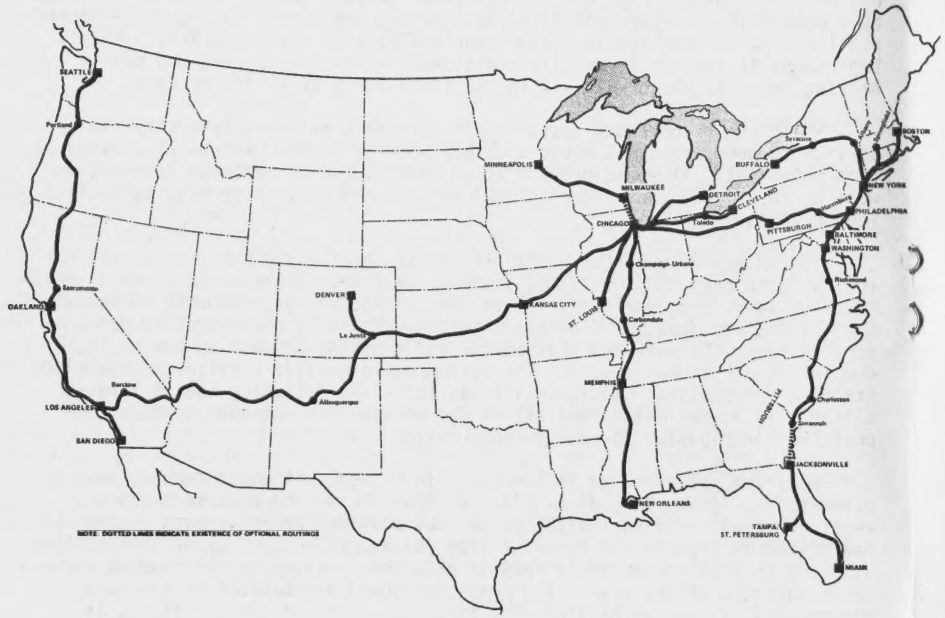
The 18,900-mile system would provide at least daily services on all routes. The basic national long distance east-west links would provide coast-to-coast service on northerly routes via Chicago and on southerly routes via New Orleans and Houston. The basic north-south links would provide daily service along the east and west coasts and from the Midwest to the South, completing a national system. The system would provide service to about 160 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), including the 36 largest cities. It is estimated that all of the services recommended could make a positive contribution to energy conservation.

Were the system to be in operation in FY 1979, it would require an estimated operating subsidy of $497 million. As it is, because present versions of authorizing legislation do not provide for implementation of the new system to begin until March of 1979, an operating subsidy of $575 million will actually be needed in FY 1979 to keep the existing system running for three quarters of the year. The projected operating subsidy need of the recommended system, in FY 1980, the first full year of its operation, is

THE PLANS THE DOT REJECTED

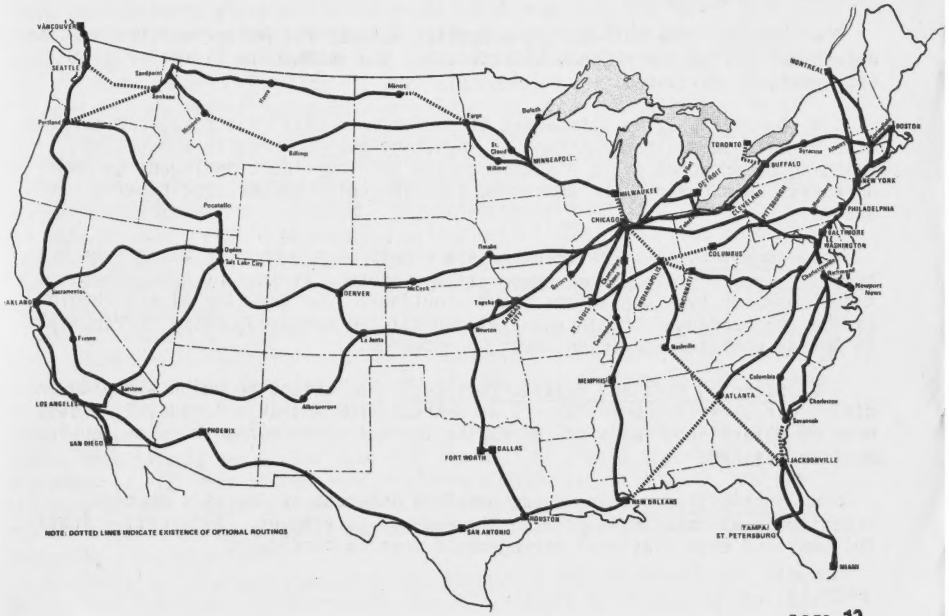
SCENARIO A: SHORT-DISTANCE SYSTEM

SCENARIO B: NATIONAL SYSTEM



SCENARIO D: MODIFIED CURRENT SYSTEM

SCENARIO E: NATIONAL—INTERREGIONAL—INTRAREGIONAL SYSTEM



estimated to be $547 million. That amount is expected to grow to $799 million by FY 1984. Operation of the current system would require a FY 1980 operating subsidy of $665 million, and a $976 million operating subsidy by 1984. The recommended system would thus save the taxpayers $118 million a year in operating subsidies in FY 1980 and $177 million a year by 1984. In order to implement the recommended system, an estimated $70 to $300 million in labor protection payments to displaced Amtrak and railroad employees will be required, as well as approximately $12 million in incremental initial capital costs. In total, when those additional costs and annual capital costs are taken into account, the recommended system would save the taxpayer between $570 and $800 million over the six-year period from 1979 through 1984, when compared to continued operation of the current system.

The recommended system does not include services which may be of interest to specific States and are appropriate candidates for State funding or combined Federal/State funding. The Department does not intend to preclude the provision of such services but has focused in its recommended system only on routes which should be 100 percent Federally funded. The funding of such State interest services is discussed in Chapter 6.

ISSUES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There are various public policy-related issues which, when resolved, will affect Amtrak's future costs, revenues, and services just as much as will the design of a new route system. These issues are discussed at length in Chapter of this report in the belief that the Congress, the Department, and Amtrak will benefit from receiving the public's views. They include:

- Fare policy. Because of the ever-widening gap between revenues and costs, the objectives of the Amtrak fare structure must be explicitly determined and techniques of tariff construction must be used which will properly meet those objectives.

- Market. The current and potential markets for Amtrak service must be determined and better methods of attracting the automobile passenger to the train must be developed.

- Corridors. The attributes of a true intercity rail passenger corridor must be defined and the question of investing public funds in converting existing or proposed short distance routes into corridors analogous to the Northeast Corridor must be addressed through public sector cost-benefit analysis.

- Commuters. Amtrak transports a significant number of passengers who travel on sharply discounted commutation tickets. It must be determined whethe those commuter type operations should continue. The question of who should assume the burden of the incremental capital and operating costs attributable to Amtrak commuter operations must be answered.

- Sleeping cars and related services. The extent to which sleeping and dining car services contribute to or detract from Amtrak's financial results must be determined. Ways of increasing the net contribution of such services must be defined.

- Institutional. There are problems inherent in Amtrak's present organizational relationships with the Federal Government. Alternative institutional and organizational arrangements must be considered.

In our last issue we listed the trains that would be discontinued if the preliminary DOT plan were adopted as it stands. The DOT announced shortly after the plan appeared that the ADIRONDACK and the NIAGARA RAINBOW would not be cut because they are partially state-supported trains. The DOT said they were omitted in error from the map.

The route cuts, important as they are, tend to overshadow other very important elements of the plan. In fact, it is more likely that the routes will be kept than that the other controversial proposals are rejected. One of these is that the institutional arrangements under which Amtrak functions be changed. The DOT clearly wants more control over Amtrak, as it has since Amtrak's inception. The main "problems" as DOT sees them are: (1) The DOT, which is accountable to the President and Congress for adhering to the Federal budget, has limited control over Amtrak's expenditures. (2) The Amtrak Board is technically not accountable to the Federal budget once funds are advanced to them. (3) "Congress and the Administration are often put in the untenable situation of having to provide supplemental subsidies or have the trains stop running." The DOT suggests seven options for changing Amtrak's institutional status: (1) Keep the structure as is but strengthen the spending guidelines provisions of the Amtrak Act. (2) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation and place the Government in control of Amtrak's budgetary and financial affairs. (3) Restructure Amtrak as a wholly-owned Government corporation with a structure like the Tennessee Valley Authority. (4) Change Amtrak as proposed in pending House bill 11089 (with a 3-man Board, and expenses paid from an operating account in the Treasury. (5) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation like the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation. (6) Make Amtrak a wholly-owned Government corporation. (7) Make Amtrak a sub-agency of the Dept. of Transportation.

Another very important element of the report is the consideration of fares. The DOT is concerned that the trend of revenues is to cover a smaller portion of total costs as time goes by. The percentage of costs covered by revenues has dropped in fiscal years 75, 76 and 77 to 44%, 39.8% and 37.4%, from over 55% in 73 and 74. (This is the area that Caltrans director Gianturco was alluding to in her statement about airline fares noted on page 7.) The report notes that there are 5 ways of setting fares: (1) price to maximize ridership; (2) price to minimize deficit; (3) relate the fare structure to the passenger cost of travel via alternate modes; (4) relate the fare structure to the cost of the service; (5) minimize the deficit per passenger-mile or other unit of output. The DOT is clearly biased in this matter, preferring Amtrak to raise fares further to minimize the deficit rather than to aim for maximizing ridership. The report states that low fares to maximize ridership "would clearly not be consistent with good public policy." Instead, "the objective of significantly reducing the deficit should remain as a public policy goal." This viewpoint seems to represent a significant anti-rail bias, coming from the DOT which encourages airlines to lower fares sharply while maintaining high subsidization of the airline industry without complaint.

Another element considered is that of sleeping car, dining and baggage services. Here the DOT suggests reducing or modifying dining and lounge service to cut costs, increasing food and drink prices, and designing any new dining cars so they can be operated with minimum staffing. The DOT is concerned about the lower monetary contribution from sleeping cars than from coaches. The report states that this is due to the fact that the cost of providing a berth-mile in a sleeper is 2.2 cents higher than providing a seat-mile in a coach, and the sleeping car revenue per berth-mile is 1.3 cents higher than coach revenue. The report suggests adding sleeping car surcharges in peak periods and discount prices in off-peak periods.

Another very important element is the concept of emerging corridors, brought out by Paul Reistrup. In the report, the DOT attempts to dispose of the idea that any corridors outside the Northeast Corridor are worth developing. In order

to effect this disposition of the emerging corridors, the report sets up three arbitrary characteristics which no route except the Northeast Corridor can meet. These standards are speed, frequency and location and distance boundaries. In terms of speed, the route must be capable of upgrading to 79mph at a minimal cost. A minimum of 5 morning and 5 afternoon/evening departures should be scheduled; in general, frequency and scheduling should be structured to meet the demand of the traveler desiring to make a one-day roundtrip with sufficient time at the point of destination. For location and distance boundaries, the DOT recommends a maximum length of 250 miles, and there must be dense population along the route. The section on corridors is one of the most weakly presented in the report, for it mentions only two proposed or existing corridors in its density comparisons--the Northeast Corridor and San Francisco-Los Angeles. The latter is clearly an extreme example of a proposed corridor without density along most of its route, but other examples are not considered. The report mentions the three primary emerging corridors given in Amtrak's 5-year plan--Chicago-Detroit, Los Angeles-San Diego, and Dallas-Ft. Worth-Houston-San Antonio. The report mentions two studies involving corridors--an FRA study of Nov 1977 and the USRA's preliminary system plan for Conrail. The DOT's conclusion: "None of the studies reviewed were (sic) supportive of the economic feasibility of rail passenger corridors. It may be concluded from them that the prospects for emerging corridors, with the exception of the Northeast Corridor, are not encouraging under prevailing conditions." But the report adds: "Whether any corridors should be selected for increased and upgraded rail service, and if so, what corridors, is in the view of the Department still open to question."

About commuter services, the study raises three questions; (1) Does Amtrak provide commuter service: (2) If so, should Amtrak be allowed to continue to provide such services? (3) If Amtrak is to continue as a commuter carrier, should the incremental losses and incremental capital investment pertaining to commuter service continue to be funded from intercity funds supplied by the general taxpayer?"

The general tone of the report is anti-passenger train. The report places an excessive emphasis upon financial considerations with very little concern for considerations of people matters, environmental impact, or quality of life. The study is a financial study, not a transportation study, and might have been performed by the Office of Management and Budget rather than by transportation professionals. There is virtually no concern with the person/mode interface. There is an almost total lack of perspective when confronting transportation financial matters, and thus the report fails even as a financial document, since its view is extremely lopsided. There is no attempt to compare subsidies for passenger trains with the large subsidies given other modes. One suspects that one of the major motivations for doing the report is that the bus industry is demanding support on the order of that given Amtrak. This is strongly hinted in Adams's introduction to the report: "We must remember that the primary surface intercity common carrier mode is the intercity bus. Any decision to expand the scope or intensity of Amtrak's operations must carefully consider the subsequent impact on private sector competitors." Interestingly, the report effectively criticizes the bus industry for not capitalizing on the reduction in train routes at the inception of Amtrak.

An example of the report's anti-rail tone is its attempts to attack one of rail's strong points, energy efficiency: "At best, Amtrak diesel powered operations outside the NEC are significantly more fuel efficient than the automobile and as fuel efficient as typical intercity bus operations. The San Diego-Los Angeles operation is an excellent example, with around 100 psgr mpg. At worst, Amtrak operations are much worse than even the automobile, let alone the bus. The FLORIDIAN...used more fuel in FY 1976 than if everyone had traveled by automobile and the mail had been carried by truck."

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	JAN	FEB	MAR
Metroliners	155,765	138,021	175,878
N.E. Corr. Conventional	315,942	310,531	382,688
New Haven-Springfield	24,523	24,388	26,896
NY-Philadelphia	253,206	213,811	254,670
Phila-Harrisburg	79,438	71,863	84,927
NY-Harrisburg	13,844	13,744	20,193
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	49,898	46,076	53,779
Chicago-St. Louis	15,347	15,171	17,281
Chicago-Milwaukee	18,985	17,879	23,797
Chicago-Detroit	32,962	31,676	39,695
Chicago-Carbondale	12,516	11,852	14,603
Chicago-Quincy	7,972	7,215	8,703
Los Angeles-San Diego	44,020	58,121	61,189
Seattle-Portland	4,403	4,574	6,217
Seattle-Vancouver	3,349	3,141	4,857
Washington-Cincinnati	4,046	4,049	5,236
Washington-Martinsburg	23,234	18,754	22,351
Oakland-Bakersfield	5,108	4,443	7,196
NY-Montreal	8,624	8,016	9,364
Chicago-Port Huron	6,248	5,688	8,343
Chicago-Dubuque	2,664	2,434	4,254
St. Paul-Duluth	3,146	4,032	5,426
Washington-Montreal	26,978	26,309	32,543
NY-Florida	48,602	52,219	72,694
Chicago-NY/Washington	13,078	9,961	15,533
Chicago-Cincinnati/Wash.	9,563	5,633	8,992
Kansas City-NY/Washington	12,186	9,553	15,215
Chicago-Seattle (north)	12,279	10,267	13,634
Chicago-Seattle (south)	14,736	13,133	16,961
Chicago-San Francisco	19,402	18,997	25,602
Chicago-Los Angeles	16,309	12,840	20,388
Chicago-Houston	15,992	13,223	24,387
Chicago-New Orleans	15,558	14,590	17,042
Chicago-Florida	8,679	7,446	13,777
Chicago-Laredo	8,624	7,870	11,397
Los Angeles-New Orleans	6,471	4,493	7,319
Los Angeles-Seattle	27,399	23,069	33,016
Chicago-NY/Boston	18,400	13,541	20,612
Boston-Newport News	47,678	44,307	56,515
NY-Savannah	27,578	25,795	35,828
Seattle-Salt Lake City	10,782	8,666	11,768
Boston-Tri-State	2,632	3,068	4,672
Special Trains	2,202	15,622	6,503

Systemwide ridership totals: Jan 1,390,368; Feb 1,355,081; Mar 1,704,941.

Amtrak released these ridership figures, for Jan, Feb and Mar 1978, on May 19 (see First March RTN for earlier figures). Starting with these, the data are reported in a new format, and ridership will be given on a fiscal year basis.

Footnotes: (1) Some NE Corridor riders are shown on Boston-Newport News, NY-Savannah, and Washington-Montreal routes. (2) Chicago-Carbondale includes Chicago-Champaign riders. (3) Some Seattle-Portland riders are now attributed to Seattle-Salt Lake City route. (4) Washington-Montreal route includes local Washington-Springfield traffic. (5) Chicago-Seattle (south) route includes Chicago-Duluth riders and Chicago-St. Paul local riders. (6) Boston-Newport News includes local Boston-DC riders. (7) NY-Savannah includes local NY-DC riders. (8) Boston-Tri-State route excludes local Boston-DC riders.

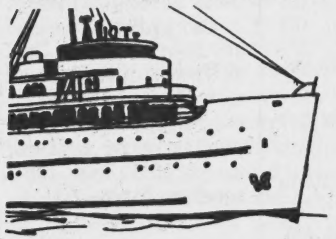
Jan ridership overall was down 4.7% from Jan 1977; Feb ridership was up 4.5% from Feb 1977; and Mar ridership (including Easter weekend) was up 10.1% over the previous March.

RAIL CANADA

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION has ordered the E&N Dayliner extended 5½ months, to Dec 13, 1978. Previously, the RDC run was set to expire Jun 30 pending appeals by the B.C. government. Photo at right shows the Dayliner in the snow at Courtenay, B.C. last Jan 24. Photo by Rex Lee Carlan.

VIA'S SUMMER PLAN, expected to become effective Jun 1, to re-route the transcontinental trains in a controversial manner, will likely be delayed. VIA Western VP-Operations Harold F. Murray told the press that it may be July before VIA officially takes over the two transcontinental services. In the meantime, present scheduling should continue. There are reports from various Canadian areas that ticket agents are totally confused about upcoming services and fares. Some are running out of railroad ticket stock and have no information about how to sell summer services. The reason for the delay in the summer changes is slowness in getting all union matters settled as VIA takes over.

VIA'S PROPOSED FARES for transcontinental trains are intermediate between CP fares and the lowest CN fares. VIA fares for Toronto-Vancouver are as follows: Basic fare $113, roundtrip $150, Daynighter $137, roomette $195. This compares with CN red fare $98, CN white $111, CN blue $127, CN roundtrip $139.70, white plus Dayniter $127, white plus roomette $189; and CP basic fare $133, CP roomette $232. Bus fare is $95.45, $129 roundtrip; air is $209, $240 charter class. Other proposed VIA fares are Montreal-Toronto $23 basic, $30 roundtrip, $43 roomette; Toronto-Ottawa $18 basic, $24 roundtrip, $38 roomette; Montreal-Ottawa $9 basic, $12 roundtrip, $19 club; Montreal-St. John, N.B. $31 basic, $41 roundtrip, $55 roomette. Children 5 and under are expected to ride free, while 6-12 pay half fare. All fares will be rounded to even dollars, with a $3 minimum. The average VIA fare is expected to be 8% above CN fares and 13% below CP, with the overall average 6% above existing fare levels. VIA estimates that these fare levels will reduce ridership 4% on CN routes and increase it 25% on CP lines.



THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE mini-cruise ship between Victoria, B.C. and Seattle is again in jeopardy. B.C. tourism minister Grace McCarthy wants to eliminate the ship after this year. There is no operational reason to drop it, according to reports--the move is strictly a political one. The ship's loadings are high as the season begins--1477 on May 18, 1400 on May 20. Supporters are asking readers to write: Premier Bill Bennett, Parliament Building, Victoria, B.C., Canada, to urge him to retain the ship on the Seattle-Victoria run after this year. Letters to editors of major newspapers are also helpful. The ship's schedule is shown in the current nationwide Amtrak timetable as "seasonal steamship service".

B.C.'S ROYAL HUDSON steam train schedule for 1978: train runs Wed thru Sun thru Jun 18; starting Jun 21 it runs daily except Tues thru Sep 10, then Fri, Sat, Sun only until close of season Oct 9. Leaves North Vancouver 10am; adult fare $6.50.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING will take place next on May 31, the last meeting for Paul Reistrup. The Board is expected to take a position on the DOT report at that time. The agenda of the meeting includes requests for commitments to the construction of the 12.6 miles of track missing on the LAKE SHORE line, rehabilitation of the on-board service support facility at NY's Penn Station, roof rehabilitation of the New Orleans depot and emergency track improvements in the N.E. Corridor..... STATE OF MINNESOTA was expected at last word to continue its subsidy of the ARROWHEAD service thru the end of 1978, but will study its "economic and social impacts"..... LINCOLN, ILLINOIS' FORMER GM&O depot has been sold to a party who will convert it into a restaurant. Amtrak's STATE HOUSE continues to stop at the unmanned station, and uses one room near the restaurant as a waiting room..... PITTSFIELD CITY COUNCIL (Mass.) is considering moving the present Amtrak station, some 3 miles from the city, to a downtown location in the proposed Pyramid Mall, a shopping complex adjacent to the tracks. Costs would be borne 50/50 by Amtrak and the city..... THE ICC PERMISSION to the Rock Island, reported last issue, to drop its two passenger trains was contingent upon no further complaints being filed with the ICC, or the ICC deciding to take up the case. It seems likely that a complaint would be filed to stop the impending May 29 discontinuance..... NATIONAL VISITOR CENTER at Washington Union Station --remember it? The House Public Works and Transportation Committee on May 15 agreed on a bill to put $36 million more into the center and finish it in a scaled-down version of the original. Secretary Adams was displeased with the plan, foreseeing need for more interior space in the future. The bill calls for building a 3-lane road between the Amtrak terminal and the visitor center.....

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FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION in May proposed a new regulation that airline passengers be required to stay in their seats and keep seat belts fastened all during a flight except when moving to the rest room. This is to guard against injuries from unexpected air turbulence or sudden aircraft maneuvers.....

RAILROAD PASSENGER WEEK in April was declared by the governors of Arizona and Vermont, in addition to the Missouri declaration we reported before.....

THE ARKANSAS ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers held an organization meeting on May 27 in Little Rock. Interested individuals can contact Bill Pollard at 413 Brahma, Conway AR 72032..... THE COAST STARLIGHT struck an overturned auto on the tracks at Simi Valley CA on its southbound run on May 3. An off-duty policeman and two passersby pulled the car's two female occupants to safety just 15 seconds before the train's impact. The Amtrak engine suffered slight damages but there were no injuries. One occupant of the auto was injured when the car went out of control and overturned..... AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION announced on May 19 a new advertising campaign by Ally & Gargano Inc. of NY. It emphasizes the "ills of driving" on a 900-mile trip, using newspaper ads and billboards. Spot TV commercials should be appearing soon also. Auto-Train said its schedule will be reduced by eliminating service on Tues & Wed from May 23 thru Oct 25; Thurs during Sept; and Thanksgiving Day, Nov 23. The company's fares will be adjusted, with ICC approval pending, to institute a new year-round fare. The new one-way rate will be $225 for an auto and driver, with each extra adult passenger paying $70. For the first time, children under 12 pay half the adult fare ($35) throughout the year. Regular bedroom rates remain at $85, $100 and $115 for a 2-, 3- and 4-bed compartment respectively. If tickets are bought before Jun 15, they will be good after that date, when the new fares become effective.....